

# STARBURST™

## GRAND 50th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

featuring reviews of  
**BLADE RUNNER**  
**POLTERGEIST**  
**THE THING**

PLUS interviews with  
**FRANK MARSHALL**  
**MAKEUP WIZARD**  
**RICK BAKER**

**BLADE RUNNER**  
**ASSOCIATE**  
**PRODUCER**  
**IVOR POWELL**

and bonus colour poster for  
Ghost of Slumber Mountain  
Willis O'Brien's 1919  
special effects  
masterpiece



THE BLADE RUNNER CHRONICLES



Editor:  
**Alan McKenzie**  
Design:  
**Rahid Khan**  
Editorial Assistance:  
**Gilly Joseph**  
Production:  
**Tim Hampson**  
and  
**Alison Gill**  
Colour:  
**Chasemworth Ltd**  
Typesetting:  
**London**  
Composition  
Advertising:  
**SH Space Sales**  
Distribution:  
**Comag**

Publisher:  
**Stan Lee**

Writers this issue:  
**John Broenan**  
**Chris Charles**  
**Tony Crawley**  
**Phil Edwards**  
**Richard Hollis**  
**Alan Jones**

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## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



And still the horror vs science fiction debate rages on. A certain number of our readers seem to become extremely upset whenever we print a picture with blood in it. A similar number applaud our efforts to give coverage to a sub-division of the horror genre that is always neglected by other film magazines. Seems we can't win. For the record, *Starburst* will continue to be "The Magazine of Cinema and Television Fantasy". That means we will continue to cover both fields as extensively as we can. However, just on a personal level, I am a little tired of gore films. I'd guess that the proliferation of this kind of picture has had its day. We seem to see fewer of them in our cinemas. And as *Starburst* is designed to reflect the cinematic (and tv) trends, you will be seeing less gore material in the magazine. If anything, *Starburst* 48's Zombie Special was intended as a kind of "last word" on the subject.

In addition, some readers complained that we should have been covering the fantasy summer releases instead of Zombies. A fair comment. But we can only cover movies when the film companies make the material available and after we've seen the films. We don't have a crystal ball. With the sheer weight of product piling through most of the major film companies for summer release, the preview circuits have been jammed to capacity. We rectified the situation in *Starburst* 49. Film companies are understandably wary about showing their movies to journalists too early. After all look what happened with *Conan*. We reviewed it a month ahead of time—for which we apologise to Twentieth Century-Fox.

Now, a word about the format change and the price rise. We know that adding twenty pence to the cover price might be hard on your pocket. And, believe us, if there was any way we could have avoided it we would have. But a price rise was imminent anyway. We have no control over things like increased costs. Every year, everybody wants more

money, whether it be the Electricity Board, the milkman or the corner grocery store. When we saw that a price hike was unavoidable we paused to consider. Many readers had written to say that they hated the idea of losing colour pages from *Starburst*. I hated the idea, too. Surely, I reason, colour is part of the magic of fantasy films. Further, those readers had said that they were quite happy to pay for the privilege of the return of those lost eight colour pages. So there you have it. The return of the colour pages, but it costs you a little extra. Whether you agree with this or not we want to hear from you.

I hope this little ramble has gone some way to explaining our side of the story. Now to other things.

Recently, Phil Edwards and I interviewed Ivor Powell (who can be found in this issue), Ridley Scott and Syd Mead (both of whom appear in *Starburst* 51). All spoke of the fact that the version of the film *Blade Runner* you will see on the screen differs from the movie that they originally made. Phil and I were lucky enough to see a version of *Blade Runner* before it was changed too much. We feel that it was a superior version. Now don't get me wrong. *Blade Runner* is still a stunning picture. Ridley Scott's footage is too brilliant to be severely affected by any amount of re-cutting. But the Ladd Company executives must have known what kind of film they'd agree to finance from reading the script. No matter that preview audiences in America had reacted badly to the film because the presence of Harrison Ford led them to believe that they were going to see *Raiders of the Lost Androids*. Like critics, preview audiences can express only opinions. And in this critic's opinion, *Blade Runner* was a better film before diverse hands got to work on it. So, I'd like to end this editorial with a plea to the film companies. Let film-makers get on with making films. That's what you hire them for.

Alan McKenzie, Editor.

Firstly I suggest you find a padded room somewhere because this is NOT a complimentary letter. Over the years since your magazine erupted onto the market I have been an erratic buyer. The reason is that it never fails to send me into paroxysms of outrage and anger.

As *Starlog* (your US equivalent) seems to blend criticisms, editorials and news to perfection, *Starburst*, on the other hand, seems to be burying itself under a pile of its own cynicisms. I find it increasingly difficult to believe that any of your contributors actually like science fiction and fantasy; they seem to do nothing else but make snide remarks at anything remotely successful that isn't connected to the *Star Wars* saga.

The Sci fi/Fantasy world does not begin and end with George Lucas, George Romero and Zombies. If I pick up another *Starburst* with Zombies and various pictures of people with bits of their anatomies missing, I think I'll go mad (madder than I am already that is).

Of course being a *Star-Trek* and a *Dr. Who* fan doesn't help. Though before you pass me off as being narrow minded I also read Philip K. Dick, Brian Aldiss, Ben Bove, John Norman and Terith Lea and many others from the wide world of fantasy fiction.


What is it about these two series that annoys your contributors so much—their success may be? Issues 47 and 48 seem particularly ripe with the "lets-get-at-Trakkias-and-Doctor-Who-fans" syndrome, and I'd like to spend some time ensnaring these criticisms.

Let's begin with *Dr. Who* and Chris Charles' *Book World* column. I cannot agree or disagree about his comments on "Peter Davison's Book of Alien Monsters" since I haven't read it, but I strongly disagree with his assumption that "the producers must not be assuming that the audience's average mental age is around six". I defy even the great Mr. Charles to explain some of the sub-titles of a Christopher Bidmaad script (*Logopolis* and *Castrovalva*) or the religious allegory of Christopher Bailey's *Kinda*.

As for the little joke (very little joke, in my opinion) about a certain Antipodean air hostess may I direct Mr. Charles' attention to another Mervyn Monthly *Dr. Who* Monthly if it's not beneath his dignity where he will find that Tegan is well on her way to becoming the most popular *Dr. Who* assistant since Elizabeth Sladen.

Let us now move on to John Brosnan, to *Star Trek* (the capitals are intentional) and to the *It's Only a Movie Column* (Issue 47). What Mr. Brosnan did or did not see at "The Great Star Trek Convention Disaster of 1969" is debatable, since his view of the whole *Trek* phenomena is distinctly biased. It must have been one hell of a convention if 10,000 fans (all female and all watching a screening of *Amok Time*) went on the rampage. Except for the Birmingham Exhibition Centre I can't think of anywhere big enough to house that many fans and that wasn't even built in '69. Where were all the male fans? Presumably helping to fix the projector!





As for Birmingham "still bearing the scars of (this) terrible event", smashed milk bottles and people being attacked with spock-ears hardly present a picture of fans bringing a city to its knees. Mr. Brosnan make Watergate sound like a slight mishap with a couple of tapes by comparison.

I do not doubt that something did happen at the Birmingham Convention, but nothing like to the extent John Brosnan implies.

Staying with John Brosnan, in issue 48 he expresses horror at the fact that A. E. Van Vogt had anything to do with *Star Trek*. Why be surprised after all Arthur C. Clark, Alan Dean Foster, Larry Niven, Harlan Ellison and other main stream sci-fi writers all have an interest in *Trek*, some have even written episodes for the series. Even the revered Isaac Asimov, a self-confessed Trekkie, described the series as "the most sophisticated example of science-fiction on the television screen", (and who am I to argue).

Finally, in this section on John Brosnan, we come to the comparison between *Trek* and, of all people, Barbara Cartland. Once again I refer him to the distinguished list of writers who penned the series—need I say more.

Of course *Trek* isn't perfect. I would be the first to say that third season *Star Trek* was on a level with the Best of *Buck Rogers* and *Space: 1999* (and that's pretty low). As for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, I believe it to be the most boring Sci-fi film made in a long, long time, but it was not all bad and I think Mr. Brosnan should recognise that.

Perhaps it's time you took a leaf out of your sister publication *Cinema's* book and changed the title of Brosnan's column. My suggestion: *It's Only a Cheap Shot*.

You'll be pleased to know that I have only one more criticism to make, so I'll make it a brief one.

I refer you to a comment made by your monthly oracle of all things good (and bad), Tony Crawley in issues 48:

"... *Star Wars* movies have people and *Star Trek* movies star cardboard, wigs,

face-lifts and cast-off models from Mme Tussauds, right?"

To some degree I would agree with this comment (surprise, surprise) *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* suffered from a lack of cohesive scripting, grandios ideas and over-blown special effects—the actors didn't stand a chance.

However, as far as I know, no member of the cast has had a face-lift nor did any of them wear wigs. What was unavoidable however was the fact that they had aged. It was 14 years since the series ended and only two or three years had past in the movie (another big mistake by the producers). Therefore they were made up to look younger—rather unsuccessfully at that. The cast of the saga of *Star Wars* films have only a year or so between productions so this problem never arises.

As for the bit about *Star Wars* movies having people, I beg to differ. *Star Trek* had three years and 79 episodes of character development making its characterisations infinitely more superior about people any more than *ST: TMP* was its about spell-binding special effects and an incidental storyline.

Both *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* deserve to be given credibility in the world of science-fiction, but for different reasons.

Let's see a marked improvement in your magazine. It purports to being the "Magazine of Cinema and Television Fantasy" but it deals with a narrow part of this subject. How about articles on Disney's *Tron*, John Carpenter's *The Thing*, Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, features on special effects, the writers, the actors, even *Star Trek* and *Dr. Who* if you like (only please don't give them to John Brosnan).

Until *Starburst* improves I will continue to support your other magazines, *Cinema* and *Dr. Who Monthly*, and hope for better things. Paul Butler, Camberley, Surrey.

Any of our reader's care to comment on Paul's letter?



# THINGS TO COME by tony crawley



## THE MANDRAKES

There were some sceptics in Cannes (they were French, *bien sur!*) who still question the movie will ever be made... An hour or so in the company of French producer Eric Rochat (no sceptic, he) and his young British director Julian Temple—not to mention a surprise poolside apparance by creator Lee Falk, himself—reassured me that everything remains at Gol for the big *Mandrake The Magician* movie.

Shooting is scheduled to be underway by September with locations in New York, Los Angeles and—because that's where Temple first met Falk—at Yucatan, in Mexico. Plus interludic end effects at Shapperton studios.

Julian Temple is the ex-National Film student who made *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* with the *Sex Pistols*, *Punk Can Take It*, the *Comic Strip* short; *The Secret Policeman's Other Ball*; and countless promo-videos starring, among others, The Kinks, *Depeche Mode* and Gary Numan. That hardly sounds the correct background for the director of a big effects movie, but Rochat is very high on Julian (suggested to him by none other than David Puttnam). Temple, himself looks remarkably cool (and quietly confident) for the position he's in. And that is, at 21, being the youngest director of a fantasy movie—or one budgeted at around 12 million buckeroos.

(He probably knew what I didn't discover until the end of the festival—that foreign markets have already paid up to six million dollars for distribution rights to the film. He's half-way home before shooting an inch of film!)

Julian frankly admits he'd never heard of *Mandrake* (who he's in Britain?) until David Puttnam suggested he get in

touch with Eric Rochat. By now, Temple must know more about *Mandrake* and his magic than even Rochat, who is a die-hard fan (like most Europeans) of the Lee Falk and *Phil Davis* strip. Rochat remembers his favourite strips. Temple had recently viewed the entire, 40-year collection on microfilm at the King Features Syndicate headquarters in New York.

"I was fascinated by the changes influenced by time—the cars, the buildings, the obsessions. Even the way they fought in 1941 was very different, from say, 1935..."

In Cannes, neither *Mandrake* would hint at casting for the movie. Rochat made it clear he wanted the film to remain close to the original characters: *Mandrake*, Princess Narda, Lother, Hojo...

...and the old arch villain, Cobra. "One of the crucial elements," agrees Rochat, "is whether we take big names or unknown actors. We already know the Princess Narda could be played by an Italian or English actress."

My money's on Ornella Muti. I just left it in my bones. She should be finished with her new *Ban Gazarra* teaming, *The Girl From Trieste*, in good time. She should also be just in the right mood to play a second comic-strip heroine, too, after *Flash Gordon*, because in that Italian movie, *Gazzarra* plays... a comic-strip artist. With La Muti as his muse.

But who to play *Mandrake*? Ah, there's the rub! Anthony Harran was a complete no-no in the abysmal Universal TV-pilot some years ago. I put the question to the man who should know best, Lee Falk (who quite obviously based the suave character upon his suave self). "Imagine a young David Niven," said Lee. "And you have the essence of *Mandrake*." Ah!

## MAGIC MAKERS

Things first reported on Frenchman Eric Rochat's coup in winning the *Mandrake* rights two years ago. So why the delay? "There is a right time for every picture," he says. Meaning what? "Meaning we've had to wait for the necessary special effects to grow up for us. Finally, today, very elaborate effects are possible. *Mandrake* can at last be done in the proper manner."

So you see the *Mandrakes* weren't really keeping quiet about their casting. They're simply more concerned in securing the correct effects people. Obviously, with a magician—well, an illusionist, then—as their hero, effects will play a major role in the film's success—or otherwise.

"Effects can be very heavy if the picture has nothing else to offer," remarked Julian Temple. "*Superman* has been the best around because it had a sense of humour. In *Mandrake*, I want spectacular effects but also simple ones, too—classical effects going back to the days of Bunuel and Jean Cocteau. In that sense, although there will be, of course, a special effects supervisor, I'm working myself very closely on the storyboard with the designer."

It's also working very closely on an upcoming feature on *Mandrake* with more, much more information from Temple, Rochat and the grand old man of magic, Lee Falk. That, as they say, is Coming Soon...)

## 3-D RETURNS

If ever a movie needed 3-D that would be *Mandrake*, I'd say. Yet there was no hint of it from the makers. However the increasing filmland interest in the new, improved tri-di systems was hard to miss at Cannes. Two full films requiring the special glasses (red and green, no more, of course) were on show, plus a product, or promo reel of a third film, still being shot. George Romero was around and underlined his interest in trying a 3-D movie and American expert, Randall Larsen, flew in to check reaction to the *Parasite* film he worked on, and to meet up with the producers of his next two 3-D assignments, *Top Secret* and... wouldn't you know it, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

## 3-D RESCUE

"A production of a wonderful film was stopped for financial reasons in Spain," explained Menahem Golan, co-chief of The Cannon Group, in L.A. "It was in a new and marvellous 3-D process, with things coming out of the screen at you in realistic ways. We looked at the things they'd shot and thought it was great. So we decided to go ahead and simply saved the production."

A good (though hardly charitable) move by Cannon. A surprise, as well, considering that the film in question, *Treasure of the Four Crowns*, was being made in Spain by the ex-Itellen pop star, Tony Anthony—the very man who, single-handedly, started this 3-D revival

with his big Stateside hit, *Comin' At Ya*. After that success, he's the last guy I would have expected to find in funding trouble.

Well, he's okay now. His movie, from the promo reel, looks exciting stuff, with yes, good uses of the process. Bed us the *Raiders*' logo typography in his ed art's title, though. I mean, c'mon fellas, if the full movie's even half-way decent, the 3-D gimmick (and for America at least, Anthony's 3-D associated name) will sell the thing. Not some ripped-off typography.

Imagine though for one second... Indy Jones running from that huge concrete ball... in 3-D! What about it, George?

## OLD MASTERS

One cannot cover *Cannons* without mentioning The Cannon Group twice or more, whether to send up their more exploitative doings in the past or praise their sudden new uplift into major importance. Each year Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus' group—new owners of the Classic chain in Britain, of course—have some last minute film news towards the festival's final days. The films they announced don't always happen: remember the '79 fanfare about Carolina Munro returning as Stella Starr in *Sky Riders*?

They're producing Patsy Walker's first British horror flick for five years. *House of the Long Shadows*, he calls it. His scripter, Michael Armstrong, promises "a room for every nightmare and a nightmare in every room." (Sounds like my first London digs).

I feel sure it was Peter alone, though, who managed the kind of casting couple which British, American, Australian, Canadian even Israeli producers (like Golan and Globus) have been trying to pull off for years. He has, sure you're ready for this... Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing and John Carradine. All 276 years of them in the same movie. For the first time. Ever.

It can't fail, Pete. A-ga-note. As Barbara Steele first told me some years ago, both Lee and Price share the same birthday, May 27 (with eleven years difference between their births), and Cushing's birthday happens to fall on... May 26.

## DEVILISH DARIO

Well, it's about time! Dario Argento is back at work in Rome directing a fairly secret terror project called *Tenebrae*. As Dario keeps his scenarios under wraps (not even Romero knows about this one), I'm not sure if *Tenebrae* is an Argento version of *Dr Finlay's Casebook* (wherein the old housekeeper skins the old doc alive) or if the "brae" in the title is pronounced "bra", which would, of course, signify that it has Jessica Harper eaten alive by her living bra.

Dario's cast is an Italo-American ensemble headed by the (once-upon-a-time) fine Method actor, Anthony Franciosa and American expatriate Mimsy Farmer and also including John Sexon,



Daria Nicolodi, Ida Di Benedetto, Vittorio Mezzogiorno and the luscious Laura Wendel. Jessica Harper must be on her hols. Or being eaten alive by ...

## CARRY ON SAM

Pull up a pew and listen to the maestro, exploitation's Uncle Sam ... "There's a need for exploitation films. The major companies recognise that need—look at Universal with *Jaws* I, II, *Halloween* I, II, *The Thing*, *The Cat People*, *Dark Crystal* and *E.T.* And if indies (independent companies) like Filmways and Embassy aren't gonna make them, I'm ready to do my musty armour and come out to fight the good fight."

Cannes would not be Cannes without Sam Arkoff, the founder of A.I.P. The fact that he stays out of town, holding court at the sumptuous Hotel du Cap, at Cap Antibes, is even more important. Any excuse to flee the madding crowd of the Croisette and visit the Cap (Jack Lemmon, Sissy Spacek and London producer Don Boyd were among others lodging there) is worth it. Hotel du Cap is the closest place to paradise I've found on Euro-earth.

Sam has been coming here for 25 years and his Sunday lunch for business and Press pals is an institution. So is Sam's lunchtime law—no business chat. He does all that before and after, never during. A few years back his AIP was swallowed up in Filmways, with Sam as a consultant. He got out of that, worried where his consultancy fees would come from, when Brian De Palma's *Blow Out* wound up costing nineteen million dollars and not the nine mil' Sam had envisaged.

That was good for us, for as mentioned here before, Sam relaunched those famous fantasy initials with his new outfit, Arkoff International Pictures. He has about a hundred of his titles (yes, including *I Was A Teenage Werewolf*) on video now and is spending some 50 million bucks on new AIP movies over the next three years. His son, Louis, is in charge of his production slate. They had their first two productions on show in Cannes, though time allowed me only to see one only—Larry Cohn's *Winged Serpent*, which re-make or not, is terrific stuff. Scary. Bloody. And with far from the horror-norm in performances from David Carradine (as a cop ... in jacket and tie!) and Michael Moriarty having the time of his life as the beautifully cowardly, sad-sack villain-cum-winner!

## ENTER: RACHEL

Sam's other movie on show—or if you prefer, the other Samuel Z. Arkoff production—was director Andrew Davis' *The Forest Primeval*, which has *Alien*'s co-scriber Ronald Shusett among the three scribes. Star of this piece, as I'm sure old Brosnan will love to know, is Rachel Ward. (Her voice sounds fine to me, John. I mean ... look where it's been!)

In fact, my only complaint with Sam was why didn't he bring Rachel to town with him. We could have done with

some real beauties. I mean who needs Anne Archer (who?) and Deborah Raffin (come again?) and Annie Ample (not again?) as alleged representatives of today's Hollywood superlatives ... ?

## MISSING: FRANCEY

Although special 35th birthday awards were handed out on the opening night to about ten of Cannes' previous Best Film directors, there was no sign of Francis Coppola. He should have been represented in that list even though he was shooting two films back-to-back in Tulsa, as Coppola remains the only movie-maker to have won the Golden Palm Best Film award twice in Cannes history. He did have one production (*Hammlet*) in competition, while *One From The Heart*, his first film since his last winner, *Apocalypse Now*, was shown (very, very quietly) in the Film Market.

These are the first two of Coppola's first five Zoetrope studio films to come to Europe. Selling them for him is the man behind the alternative 007 project—ex-actor Merk Damon. Why him? *Old Pals*! Act! They go back a long way, Francis and Merk. They first met in 1962 on a Roger Corman AIP movie, *The Young Racers*. That's when Merk was the star and Coppola was the soundman. It was, of course, an AIP film which had us asking Sam Arkoff for Coppola memos.

"Francis made his first film for Roger Corman and myself—*Dementia 13*. It cost 50,000 dollars! If you saw Francis on that, you understand he wants to be the *padrone*. You can picture him on the slopes of Sicily, watching over his peasants. Now George Lucas is different. He runs his business like an executive. He could be running an aircraft factory! But Francis—he wants the glory more than the money. Trouble is, there's not much room to putter about in this industry. That's what is wrong with this French *autuer* stuff. It was invented by young critics who had every intention of becoming *autuers* themselves."

That's Sam for you. Always right on the button. Keep 'em coming, Sam ...

## DANTE'S INFERNAL

No re-match. After their box-office battle with *American Werewolf in London* and *The Howling*, John Landis and Joe Dante are off in opposite directions. Landis, in a way, is, going one step backwards by re-vamping *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*—while Dante's people in Cannes stress his one step forward. Far forward. Joe is setting up an sf 70mm stereo rock musical called *Christopher Space*.

Dante obviously learned something from his Landis battle. His publicity prose picks up on John's *Werewolf* line, "From the director of *Animal House*, a new kind of animal ...". Well, now we're promised: "From the producer of *Airplane*, a new kind of flying object ... From the director of *The Howling*, a new kind of supernatural suspense ... From the man who launched *The Jefferson Airplane*, a new kind of starship music



# THINGS TO COME

... "All that's really required from Joe and his (also *Piranha*) producer Jon Davison, is a new kind of hype.

## QUICKIE SEQUEL

Another sequel announced before the world's seen the original concerns The Beastmaster, much mentioned hereabouts since last Cannes. A sword 'n' sorcery number (the hero's can also communicate with some very strange animals of his epoch), it's written by the *Phantasm* team of director Don Coscarelli and producer Paul Pappe. Apparently the first movie is so good (and why not with Kubrick's British cameraman John Alcott working on it) that the money-man behind the project has ordered a re-play as fast as possible.

Guy with all the loot and faith in *Beastmaster* is Euro producer-writer-financier-distributor Sylvio Tabat. He first fell in love with the script when distributing *Phantasm* in Europe and getting to know Don and Paul. And I do mean, "fell in love." He wound up (and this is rare) bankrupting the whole shooting-matched himself as his first entry into Hollywood. How much? Oh a mere ten million dollars!

The trio worked hard on achieving a whole new look for their settings—and cast. Nikita Kratz's production sketches sparked off art director Conrad Angone and Bill Munz's effects. Bill Cruse's on-set miniatures and Alcott's *Berry Lyndon* lighting (by candles and torches) techniques. Coscarelli used an old warehouse, 15 miles out of Film City, as his studio, plus locations in Nevada's Valley of Fire and, with some 200 horse-men causing a ruckus in the place, battle scenes at LA's Smi Valley. Thanks to John Alcott's cinematographic brilliance, the shoot also included three weeks of night exteriors.

Merc Singer has the title role of the sword and magic wielder wreaking revenge on the hordas who done his city wrong. "A totally new kind of hero," says Sylvio Tabat. (Sure, I've heard it before, but he says it with such conviction, you have to believe him). "We're hoping to create a comic strip out of him. And a sequel, of course. We are creating a new hero—much as they've done with *Star Wars* and *Raiders*. But we have a new concept. Our hero is human—not a superhero."

I would have thought any guy who can chat up basties to become his allies is pretty super. Anyway, what was Indy Jones—an android?

## MODEL MAYHEM

How many times have you watched car, plane, train, tank and, in particular, rocket chases and crashes, muttering rhetorically, "Minutaires! They're all just models, y'know..." All the time, huh? Well, it's getting more difficult to see the joins now that so many units are trying to match the art of the Industrial Light and Magic Boys in San Rafael. And I wasn't too sure just what I saw when I glimpsed a bit of *Mad Mission* on video at the Atlas International stand in the



Palais building. It looked like models battling real cars... Couldn't be! The Hong Kong film is called *Aces Go Places* back home, and as top West German outfit had snapped it up for world sales, I figure it had to be better than the usual Jackie Chan chop-socky menu and that's why I decided to catch the movie on a real screen late, very late, one Cannes night. There was nothing better to do and I was rewarded with a surprise cup o' champers—and a right old giggle of a movie.

It's a kind of Bond meets *The Blues Brothers* on *The Cannonball Run*, really. Full of action and (lame)trained Americanised dubbing, the incoming New York cop, played by co-producer Carl Mek, is simply Baldy in the Hong Kong print, but re-named Kodjak for the world. (Get it? Ouch!) Forget him. Forget the inane plot. Forget, even Sylvia Chang's toughie policewoman (that's difficult). The stunts are the movie. Indiana/Bond stuff from our hero Sam Hui (now billed as Samuel Hui for incomprehensible reasons). He motor-cycles down escalators inside swish city stores and, krrash, out through the huge plate glass windows, two or three storeys up... steals diamonds by means of a rocket-launched high-wire trapeze act... leaps over cars speeding straight at him... and makes one getaway in a very Bondian car-cum-hang-glider affair.

Well, Sam Hui, Hui or Hall, doesn't do all of that. The actual stunts are American. It shows. In their apertise. Danvar Mattson drives the cars, Cylon Or (no kidding!) is on motorcicle, Bob

Yerkes on the rope, Erherd Gingsby in the glider and Gene Griff kept busy blowing up most of Hong Kong during 95 minutes.

The real treat, though, comes in that remarkable confrontation between our hero and the baddies. He sets an entire armada of model cars against the gangsters' big limos. An extraordinary sight. A line-up, from one side of the screen to the other, of miniature autos in the foreground—and the big jobs, revving up for the encounter in the background.

At first glance, particularly on a tiny video screen, you're not sure. It could be a clever camera angle, a special lens distorting the size of the foreground machines.

But, no... as one car shoots off on a recca, speeds (well, wobbles) pell-mell right up to the real aars, looks 'em over, gauges the distance or whatever, then shoots back to the line-up, there's no doubt about it. It's a model! All the foreground forces are models! They rav up anaw and one by one they take off—careen down to the limos and, well, blow 'em up, one by one. Each model car, you see, contains a similarly radioactive... bomb!

What any of this has to do with reality—or indeed, our genre—is really unimportant. This sequence (like so many of the flesh stuff arranged by Messrs Mattson, or, Yerkes, Gingsby and Griff) is, in stunter lingo, and no doubt the audience's, too, one helluva great gag.

How long, I wonder, before Jimmy Bond... or Indy Jones... makes use of the same idea. It's a blast.

## ENTER: SYNGENOR

Add a new monster to the year's collection. Name of Syngenor. Or in full, Synthetic Generic Organism. That's the thingie doing all the slaying in William Melone's American movie, *Scared to Death*. Syngenor is something that shouldn't have got out on the streets, or indeed in the sewers. It's an invention that was abandoned. Except nobody told it so. All part of a U.S. Defence Dept. project to create, manufacture at will—the perfect soldier. An unstoppable force. Its creator has died and there ain't nothing to stop it now.

John Stinson, as a kind of Joe Wembuegh clone—a top cop turned best-selling author—is our hero trying to cut off Syngenor in its prime. Before—but no, to late—it starts reproducing, with its young pods feeding off the dying victims of Momma (or is it Daddy?). Stinson is an Eastwood fan. He has a 44 Magnum and that gets rid of the pods. It also alerts the parent... and the stalk is on, down sewers, up storm-drains, through miles of murky corridors until hero (and heroine Toni Jannotte, of course—what's the use of a woman in the plot if she's not in jeopardy?) are cornered in a machine-shop warehouse... which also contains a drop-forge.

A what? C'mon, I'm not going to give it all away... Like the poster says, "If you're frightened by the unknown... wait until you face reality!" And reality, thy name is drop-forge!

## HOME COMING

As I said last month, the one, true, gold-plated, copper-bottomed, standing ovation smash-hit of the entire festival was *E.T.* It's bound to be the box-office hit of the year (although *Rocky III* and the *Star Wars*/Empire re-issue aren't exactly slouches). When Steven Spielberg touched down in New York on his way back to L.A. after the ecstatic world premiere on the final night of Cannes '82, he picked up the New York Times and found a letter addressed to him occupying the entire back page of the prestigious *Business Section*.

In movie annals, it was an unprecedented film ad of the kind more usually to be found in the showbiz trade mags; less expensive and seen by less people. The letter didn't mention the film, the director's surname or even the studio opening the movie—and not quietly in 700 cinemas as he'd told us in Cannes, but suddenly fanfared into a thousand or more sites. But Spielberg knew what it was all about. So, I suspect, did all those important investors in the Universal parent company, MCA. "Welcome Beck!" letter was a grandiose, flattering tribute to the guy who had made *Jaws* and now *E.T.* for the combine.

"Dear Steven," it went. "When they were thrilled, we were thrilled. When they laughed, we laughed. When they cried, we cried. When the show was over, and they cheered, we felt very proud. With Love From Home, MCA."

I think they want a sequel. Or all his future light shows!



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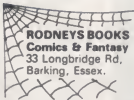
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# poltergeist



This spread: A selection of scenes from *Poltergeist*, the tale of what happens to the Freeling family when they discover their house is haunted.



## Review by John Brosnan

Let's get two things straight right away; first, *Poltergeist* is a really scary movie; secondly, there are no poltergeists in it. *Poltergeist* does have ghosts and malign demons, it has animated trees that reach in through windows and carry off small, screaming boys, it has tornados and haunted TV sets, it has a closet that sucks up everything in a room like a giant vacuum cleaner, including a little girl, it has an unfinished swimming pool full of rotting corpses, it has an evil toy clown that grabs a small boy and drags him under the bed (same small boy who is earlier attacked by the tree; kid has a tough time of it), it has slimy, pulsating "things", it has a monster who is possibly the devil himself and it has an army of coffins that explode up out of the ground and deposit their smelly contents all over the place... but it doesn't have any poltergeists. I just thought you should know.

*Poltergeist* could be called *The Amityville Horror Meets Close Encounters of the Third Kind* because it's basically a standard haunted house story that's been given the full-blown Spielberg/Lucas special effects treatment. It goes right over the top with a barrage of optical and physical effects, not to mention sound effects, and then keeps going. Most of these effects are stunning, mind-boggling, etc., as you would expect from Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic operation but often the movie's most successfully scary moments are achieved by the simplest of techniques, such as the scene where the mother (Booth Williams) hears a sound from inside the closet, hesitantly opens the door and... well, I won't go on.

You're no doubt already aware that there is some controversy over whose movie this is; director Tobe Hooper's or producer Steven Spielberg's. How much actual control Hooper had over the film I don't know but *Poltergeist* did seem to me to have Spielberg's stamp all over it. But then he *did* write the original story and co-wrote the screenplay so it shouldn't be surprising that it appears to be more of a Spielberg picture than a Hooper but I may be doing Hooper a big disservice here.

The way in which the Freeling family are presented in the early part of the movie, with the attention paid to domestic detail which is both affectionate and gently satirical, and particularly the emphasis on the smaller children, is certainly reminiscent of the family scenes in *Jaws* and *Close Encounters*.

And the story itself definitely has the Spielberg touch—it doesn't make much sense. As in *Close Encounters* there seem to be two or three different plots haphazardly joined together in *Poltergeist*, Spielberg's story-writing technique apparently being to throw in everything including the kitchen sink (in this case, it's full of maggots; you see, this guy starts to eat this steak and... well, I won't go on) and hope that it will all join up into a coherent narrative. But it didn't in *Close Encounters* and it doesn't in *Poltergeist*. I still haven't figured out what was going on—was it because the Freeling house had been built over a cemetery (but then why was only their house affected?); and why did the evil force have to come through the tv set in order to invade the house? And why didn't Spielberg credit Richard Matheson for the basic plot idea of having a little girl fall into another dimension in her own bedroom and becoming nothing but a disembodied voice? (This was, of course, a Matheson-scripted episode of *The Twilight Zone* called "Little Girl Lost".)

But none of the quibbles matter when you're actually watching the movie as you're likely to be overwhelmed by it all as I was. Tobe Hooper says in the PR hand-out: "Poltergeist is a sensational roller coaster ride that is absolutely terrifying and exciting at the same time." And for once it's justified hyperbole... Yet one must say that for all the shocks and scary moments it's a cosy horror movie. It's not going to disturb you on any deep level, as *The Exorcist* did, nor unsettle you in the way that *The Haunting*, probably the best movie made in this genre, did. Nor will it disgust you with blood and gore effects (there is only one gory sequence and it's brief), all of which demonstrates just how canny Spielberg has been with *Poltergeist*. In a real sense he has made a family horror movie designed to offend as few people as possible and to appeal to the majority.

No wonder Spielberg is where he is today... O



Review by  
John Brosnan

# BLADE RUNNER



And apparently I wasn't the only one to have this misconception. At the time of writing, it hasn't been released yet but sneak preview screenings in America indicate that Harrison Ford/Han Solo/Indiana Jones fans are going to have some difficulty in accepting their hero in a movie that actually requires them to think a little at the same time as they chew their gum. In Dallas disappointed Ford fans stomped out of the theatre in puzzled disgust and there was a similar reaction at a preview in Denver.

Not that there isn't plenty of action in *Blade Runner*; there is, and much of it pretty violent too, but action isn't the movie's main concern. For (surprise! surprise!) Ridley Scott and his team have actually been relatively faithful to

**B**lade Runner is a masterpiece, much to my surprise.

When I first heard that Phillip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* was being filmed by Ridley Scott with Harrison Ford as its star I presumed that little of the book would make it onto the screen and that the emphasis would instead be purely on action. Apart from Action Man Ford's presence in the central role this was also suggested by behind-the-scenes stories in various American magazines that concentrated mainly on the special "flying cars" being used in the movie. I soon got the impression that *Blade Runner* was going to be one long flying car chase...









Dick's novel and the result is a strange, bleak but hypnotic movie that is totally unlike any other science fiction film I've ever seen.

True, *Blade Runner* is far from being completely faithful to the book but at least it's faithful to its theme which is more than most science fiction writers have come to expect from Hollywood treatments of their work. Even Philip K. Dick himself, who tragically died while the film was being made, expressed grudging satisfaction at the final screenplay by David O. Peoples (who rewrote the original screenplay written by former actor Hampton Fancher).

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* was typical of Dick's work; he was the most idiosyncratic of all the American science fiction writers and probably the most admired and respected within the science fiction community (it's ironic that he should die now when, after a lifetime of relative obscurity, *Blade Runner* would have introduced his work to a wider audience and perhaps brought him some of the financial security he deserved). Dick used the science fiction genre, with its prefabricated set of props like aliens and robots, to explore his personal obsessions with the nature of reality, the nature of subjective perception and even the nature of God (he tended to be pessimistic about all three).

Dick published, I think, 38 books during his writing career and most of them were bizarre, off-beat, bleak and often very funny (and if you've never read any of his work it's time you started). Throughout them all, and throughout his short stories, his most consistent theme was the distinction between man and android and so it's more than appropriate that *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which confronts this question somewhat more



Left: Sean Young plays Rachael, a young woman who is unaware that she is a replicant... an artificial human.

androids. However, to the surprise of them both, he continues on with his assignment and eliminates them.

"The core of the novel," said Dick, "was that these artificial people were becoming more human while the humans tracking them were becoming more soulless." And that, fortunately, remains the core of the movie even though much else has been changed. For instance, an important sub-plot involving a religious cult called Mercerism – in which people use "empathy machines" to link up with a Christ-like figure known as Mercer who is forever climbing a hill while unseen antagonists throw



directly than the other books, should have been the first Dick novel to be filmed.

*Do Androids...* was set in a future world where most of the population has emigrated to the colony planets after World War Terminus had contaminated Earth with a radioactive dust that destroyed almost all animal life. The few animals that do remain are worshipped by the world's sparse human population and to actually own one is the ultimate status symbol. Those who can't afford real animals buy robot replicas and pretend they're the real thing...

The novel's protagonist, Rick Deckard, keeps a robot sheep on his apartment roof but like everyone else his dream is to own a real animal even though he knows he'll never be able to afford one on his salary as a policeman whose job is to hunt down renegade androids.

Then suddenly his situation changes when his department's top android bounty hunter is shot by an android and Deckard is ordered to take over the assignment of hunting down six newly arrived androids from Mars. He knows the bounty for all six will make him rich.

But as the hunt progresses, with many twists and turns and typical Dick "reality shifts" (at one point the androids convince Deckard that they are the police and that he is an android with an artificial implanted memory), Deckard loses his taste for the job. First he finds himself disgusted by the way in which another bounty hunter cold bloodedly "kills" a female android who has taken on the identity of an opera singer (Deckard is an opera fan) and then he is seduced by a beautiful android girl called Rachael who is trying to protect her android companions. She believes that after making love to her he will be unable to kill any more

stones at him – has been dropped (and probably a good thing too as it would have been difficult to get the concept across in a film).

Other changes: Deckard, called Deckard in the film, is no longer married, and Rachael isn't working for the other androids but really is on his side; and the androids, now called "Replicants", have much more substantial motive in coming to Earth: they want to discover how to over-ride their built-in "planned obsolescence" factor which condemns them to a life of only a few short years.

Nor is the world the sparsely populated one of the novel



Above: Deckard (Harrison Ford) forces Rachael to accept her human emotions. Below Deckard asks a Chinese street vendor to identify the scale he found in the apartment of the fugitive replicants.

— the film's action is set in a vast future Los Angeles teeming with people (mainly orientals; presumably because they can't afford to emigrate off-planet).

My only real quibble with the filmmakers' handling of the story is that they don't put enough emphasis on the fact that there is a shortage of animals. As a result it's not clear, unless you've read the book, why all the questions in the empathy test that the bounty hunters use to distinguish Replicants from humans *all* relate to animals. Instead the animal shortage is only referred to obliquely in the movie, such as in the sequence where Ford asks Zhora, the exotic dancer, if the snake she uses in her act is a real one. "If I could afford a real snake do you think I'd be working in a place like this?" she replies. (Also Deckard no longer has his obsessive need to own a real animal, which would have helped to convey to the audience that real animals are invaluable in this future world. . .)

In one area I think the makers have actually improved on Dick's original, and that's with the treatment of the android leader Roy Batty. His character has been greatly enlarged from the one in the book and, as played by Rutger Hauer (the German actor who also played Sylvester Stallone's terrorist foe in *Nighthawks*) he comes to dominate the film.



The Hunter and the Hunted! Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) pursues Zhora (Joanna Cassidy) through the teeming streets of LA 2019AD.

In fact the movie's key sequence isn't taken from the book at all (even though it *feels* like something Dick would have written); it's where Batty confronts the head of the android manufacturing corporation, Tyrell, who is, in a sense, both his surrogate father and his literal Maker. It's a scene charged with tremendous emotional impact; after learning that his creator has feet of clay, being powerless to save Batty and his android wife from their pre-ordained premature deaths, Batty kisses Tyrell then, with tears in his eyes, slowly crushes his head between his powerful hands. . .

And where in the book Deckard is able to kill Batty with hardly any problem the film ends with a stunning cat and mouse duel between the two, with Batty as the cat and the hapless Deckard as the mouse (it all takes place in the same building used in the *Demon With a Glass Hand* episode of *The Outer Limits*), culminating with the revelation that the android has indeed more humanity than his hunter.

But the story is only one of *Blade Runner's* attractions — it's also a marvellous visual experience thanks to sets and backgrounds that are quite extraordinary. Just as one critic rightly said that seeing *Star Wars* was like watching the first western to use real exteriors, so you feel in *Blade Runner* that you are seeing for the first time in a science fiction movie a *real* city of the future.

The opening shots of the city are breathtaking — with its huge pyramids and oil towers belching fire and smoke it's like an aerial view of Hell after the property developers have moved in. Then, as we drop towards street level one's eye is overwhelmed with visual information — we find ourselves in a world that has a convincing reality; it's bizarre and confusing yet with unsettling reminders, like the giant Coca Cola ads and the Hare Krishna people, that this is *our* future society and not an alien city on another planet.

For the first time that I can remember in a science fiction movie the skills of a vast team of effects experts — headed by Douglas Trumbull, no less — have been harnessed purely to create convincing backgrounds instead of producing an effects spectacle that gets stage centre treatment (eg, the climax of *Close Encounters* . . .) and the result is a degree of reality that future science fiction film makers will have a hard time in equalling.

The makers of *Blade Runner* had bravely used the science fiction literary device of dropping the audience right in the middle of a future setting without providing a full explanation of what's going on and so forcing them to work at picking up the various bits and pieces of information as the film progressed. Unfortunately the production company executives apparently had second thoughts about this approach — no doubt because of the sneak preview reactions — and have taken steps to demystify the story right from the start. Not only is there a written prologue now but a superfluous narration has been added, done in an embarrassing Philip Marlowe style voice by either Harrison Ford when he wasn't feeling well or by his malfunctioning Replicant. Annoyingly, this voice over, which doesn't mesh with the character that Ford is playing in the movie, is used to point out the obvious (such as what certain slang words mean) just in case the audience are put off by having to come to conclusions on their own. A pity. . .

A happy ending has also been added — the original version ended on a bleak, ambiguous, note — but I think this was probably a wise move on the part of the producers. The new ending may not make artistic sense but it's not too damaging to the film, especially when one considers that any movie these days with a downbeat ending tends to become box office poison.

Colleagues of mine who have seen the first version of *Blade Runner* tell me that the new version has been drastically re-edited and is some 15 minutes shorter. Various long sequences have been reduced by two thirds and the scenes of violence have also been trimmed and re-edited, with the result that the overall mood of the picture has been altered.

Obviously, by speeding up the pace of the film, the producers were making a late attempt to turn *Blade Runner* into the sort of production the Harrison Ford fans were expecting, ie; an all-action adventure story. Happily they haven't succeeded. The film is too much its own thing to be seriously affected by any amount of tinkering.

It was probably a mistake to cast Ford as Deckard in the first place, thus setting up false expectations about the type of movie *Blade Runner* would be, particularly as Deckard is basically weak and unsympathetic and therefore the antithesis of the usual Harrison Ford screen character. But that said one has to admit that Ford does a good job in the role if one ignores his awful voice-over, and I wouldn't be surprised to learn that it wasn't even his voice. . .)

As I've never seen the original version I can't say which is the better of the two, I can only say that the version of *Blade Runner* I saw is a powerful and provocative science fiction movie. More sheer skill and imagination has been put into any one of its scenes than in the whole of *Star Trek: The Vengeance of Ka-ka* (or whatever it's called) and one can only hope it will be successful enough at the box office to encourage other film makers to attempt to produce original, adult science fiction movies instead of the ersatz kiddie stuff that currently goes out under that name.

*Blade Runner*, I guarantee, will dazzle you. It's a strange and beautiful movie; it may not send you out of the cinema with the kind of emotional buzz that a film like *Star Wars* provides (even with the new happy ending it remains an essentially bleak film) but you'll know you've had a cinematic encounter of the superior kind.

It's definitely the best *real* science fiction movie I've seen in a long time and I can safely predict it will come to be regarded as one of all-time science fiction classics. . . . See it. ○





Below: A portrait  
of Rick Baker.



First of all I'd like to thank the Academy for creating this new category and I'm very proud to be the first winner. I'd like to thank John Landis and George Folsey for making the film, David Naughton and Griffin Dunne for their co-operation, I'd like to thank my crew, Doug Beswick, Tom Hester, Steve Johnson, Sean McEnroe, Bill Sturgeon and Elaine Baker for working so hard. I'd like to thank my parents Doris and Ralph Baker for their love and support. Last, but not least, I'd like to thank the man who has been a real inspiration to me—Dick Smith—for all that Dick has contributed to the art of make-up. Thank you!

metamorphosis takes in *The Howling*. They'd be out the door. ...!

I think the worst thing was that they overdid it. They just kept showing it and showing it. They overdid it with bladders. Also, it was obscured a lot and it was a much darker room and ours is in a well-lit room and there's no mistake about what's happening. Would you consider it your best work? I think it is some of the best work I've done. Because each thing you do, you put that knowledge into the next one.

You worked with John Landis on *Schlock* didn't you,



# RICK BAKER

I was with these words that Rick Baker accepted the first Oscar for Make-up in a new category created by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Baker was born in Binghamton, New York in 1950, son of artist Ralph Baker. From an early age, Rick was fascinated by apes, monsters and monster movies. According to his long-time friend John Landis, Baker wanted to be a doctor, just like Frankenstein, until he realized it wasn't the doctor who created the Monster—it was the make-up wizardry of Jack Pierce.

As with so many creative film makers working in the genre today, it was the picture-pecked pages of Forry Ackerman's *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine which inspired Baker's interest in monster make-up and the work of Dick Smith in particular.

Baker became friends with stop-motion animators Jim Denforth, Doug Beswick and David Allen and in 1968 was employed by Art Cloake Productions, producers of the *Gumby* television shorts.

In 1970 Baker and Beswick created the low budget monster *Octoman* and in 1971 Baker teamed with Landis to make *Schlock*. Rick created the suit for Landis to wear and the feature managed to pick up the award of Best Film and Best Director at the 1973 Trieste Science Fiction Film Festival.

In his twelve years in the business Rick Baker has created some stunning work, from the low budget exploitation of *The Thing With Two Heads* and *Incredible Melting Man*, to assisting Dick Smith on *The Exorcist*. He has created monsters and effects for a whole host of fantasy features including *It's Alive*, *King Kong*, *Funhouse*, *Live and Let Die*, *The Fury*, *Squirm*, and most recently *American Werewolf in Videodrome*. He is currently working on pre-production of *Greystoke*.

**Starburst:** I found the metamorphosis in *American Werewolf* a lot more disturbing than its equivalent in *The Howling*.

**Rick Baker:** I don't think the transformation in *The Howling* is anywhere near as clear as what happens in this film.

It's hardly believable that anyone would stand there watching for the four minutes that the

and you talked about *American Werewolf* way back then? Did you actually think it was going to happen? No, I really didn't think it would after all this time. There were several times when it looked like it would happen and it didn't. That's how I kind of got involved in *The Howling* to tell you the truth. I'd figured out some of the things that I really wanted to do and John was saying "We're going to make *American Werewolf* in the summer" but I'd heard things like that before. A lot of times in the film business you hear things like that and here were these guys saying "We're going to do a werewolf film and we'll give you a free hand to do anything you want," and there was adequate money.

Is that the same kind of thing that happened when John was going to do *Incredible Shrinking Woman* and you were going to make the ultimate gorilla?

Yeh, I had a lot of freedom and a lot of money. Just now they're starting to get a lot more educated into what it takes to do this stuff right. It takes pre-production time and they just usually call us in when they're doing a film at the normal time they call everybody in at pre-production and when you have a lot of effects, like in the picture, you have a lot of effects, you need time. I think this contains more things than I've ever made for any one film.

You handled all the make-up in the film? Well, special effects and stuff, me and my crew. I have a company called BFX that are all young, really talented people.

You were the first of a new generation of make-up men. Since you there have been quite a few others. Do you feel that you have been to help to other people? *The Howling*, I think, is a good example.

That's an interesting point. I have created my own competition in a lot of ways, yeh. Rob is a good example of that. Rob is like my protégé—I taught him from when he was a kid of fourteen. I taught him from scratch how to do all the stuff. I know Rob's really good because I taught him well. On this film is where it was really obvious. We're both doing werewolf films. The guy that I taught, whose work, I think, is better than anybody else's doing these kind of effects, is competing with me on the same kind of movie. I have to keep up with what my protégé is



doing. And the funny thing is that the idea for the metamorphosis in *The Howling* was my idea, of how it was going to work. I'm real proud of Rob.

*Do you regret it?*

I really don't. In some ways I think "Oh, maybe I shouldn't have done this." Rob is up for a couple of jobs that I'm up for now. It's really a weird situation because Rob is practically like my son. It's like now every time I go for a job, he's going to be in the picture. But I've taught several people since Rob and I've decided that I'll just go ahead and start this company and the people I teach will stay with me for a while.

*So you're not taking on new talent?*

I will if somebody comes along who has what it takes. Because there are a lot of jobs out there now for people who do the kind of work that I do. When I first started there was nothing and now Rob and the others I've taught have their hands full and each of the jobs has a lot more work in it.

*So how did you actually start? Were you interested as a child?*

Yeh, I think I was the first of the new breed of makeup artist that got into it as a fan, that was interested in make-up and in this kind of stuff, in monster films especially. I just enjoyed monster movies and watched my tv, went to the theatre, bought *Famous Monsters* and I learned stuff from *Famous Monsters* and from different magazines and books and just kind of taught myself.

*You were associated with Dick Smith very early on, weren't you?*

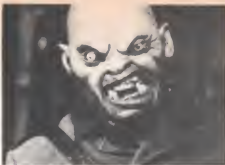
Yes, when I was about eighteen.

*How did that come about?*

Well, I always thought Dick was the best—I still do—and I was always quite a shy kid. By the time I was eighteen I'd acquired a collection of some pretty good work. At that time my parents decided they were going to go to New York to visit some relatives. So I asked if we could get around to New York City so I could meet Dick Smith and they said "sure". I sent him a letter with a bunch of photographs of things that I'd done—a lot of it was copies of things that he'd done. I got a reply right away and he thought it was terrific, he went on and on about it which made me really excited. So I spent the day with him in New York and he gave me a notepad, and I said "What's this, I thought I was just going to visit with you for a few hours," and he said "I'm going to tell you a lot of stuff I don't want you to forget." So he started rattling off formulas of how to do things and my work improved about 100% in just that one day. Things that I'd figured out on my own through long courses of trial and error, in just that one day he told me so much more. He just made so many more refinements. Dick's been great. Dick was like I was to Rob.

*I want to ask you about *Incredible Shrinking Woman*. I enjoyed the movie very much and I enjoyed Sidney more than anything else in the movie. Had Sidney originally played a bigger part than he ended up with on the screen?*

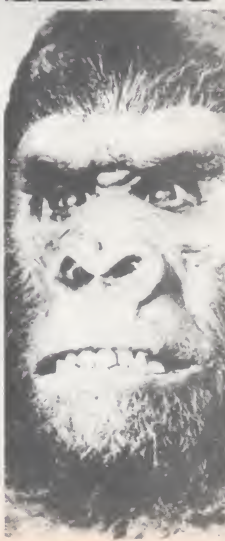
When John was going to direct the film, and in the original script, it was totally different than the film you saw—totally different. There was hardly anything similar except the fact that she gets smaller. In the original script Sidney was one of the main characters which was the reason that they would spend the money and the time to build a suit and John and I are both crazy about gorillas and apes so that worked out really well. So the only reason I was able to build that suit was because John said, "Listen there's only one guy I know that can build this and it's Rick Baker." He really wanted to give me the opportunity to build a suit like I was going to build it. So I was really the first one to start it, besides John, and I started to build Sidney and the picture got canned. They said it was going to cost too much money and I'd finished the suit already. Then the film started up again because another producer got involved who said he could do it a lot cheaper by changing things. I think the only reason they kept Sidney in it was because they'd already spent money on it. They said, "Well we've got this gorilla, we might as well use it." They cut the part down—a lot. It was probably a smart move for Lily's (Tomlin) career. The whole response that I got was that Sidney was the best thing in the movie.



Left: One of the Baker uglies from the dream sequence in *An American Werewolf in London*.



Above left: Baker works on the grotesque "rotting corpse" makeup for *American Werewolf*. Above: The final result as worn by Griffin Dunne in the film. Far left: A policeman discovers the grisly remains of one of the werewolf's victims. Left: Baker as King Kong in the *Dino de Laurentiis* remake.





How did Sidney differ from Kong as a suit?

The Sidney suit, if you see it in person, I think looks even better than it does on film. It can be totally self-contained. It could be walking around this room. The Kong suit if it's in person is a piece of s\*\*\*! There are big seams and gaps—you can see it in the film and that's the most carefully lit of anything I've ever seen in my life, in my career as a makeup artist. Dick Kline who lit that film, spent a lot of time putting gobos and little things in to block lights off at parts that didn't look too good. The Kong suit was bear hides, which I was very much against. The way I build Sidney is how I wanted to build Kong. I had it all planned out then. Sidney has mechanical arm extensions. Those hands he uses are not mine. They're much longer than mine and quite a bit larger. They're pretty incredible and they do more, again, than you see in the film. I can pick things up with them, and catch stuff, besides do the sign language. Each hair is hand tied like a wig, every hair is individually knotted in the proper direction on a stretch fabric, so you've got the right hair texture and length and direction, which is nice, whereas Kong was just hides sewn together.

Millions of words have been written about *King Kong* and what happened on it and I don't want to bore you by asking you in detail about it yet again, but could you just sum up the "Kong experience"?

It was f\*\*\*ed! It was a big disappointment. How many times in a guy's life—especially for a guy like me who really likes gorillas and would like to do a really decent realistic gorilla suit—is there going to be a film like *King Kong* made, where the lead in the film is the gorilla? When I went in there and talked to them they wanted it to be a neanderthal man. They didn't even want it to be a gorilla. My god, these guys were so off-base. I was just really disappointed. I thought, now we'll have the money and the time to really do this properly and they'll want it really good because it'll have to be good to work.

*This was before anybody realised that Dino was going to do what he did, which is screw up something like Kong—and he screwed up Flash Gordon.*

*Destroying myths—I'm sure he doesn't try to but he couldn't do a better job if he tried.*

Well, it was at that point I went in there and spoke to him about it. They just really didn't have an understanding of what Kong was and what they were getting involved in and their attitude was "That movie wasn't so hot, we're really going to make a good movie." The way they saw it was, *King Kong* was a disaster movie, that's all it was.

So they hired a disaster movie director.

I liked John Guillermin.

Oh, I think he's a fine director.

Right: The title star of *The Incredible Melting Man*.

Below: Another Nazi ugly from the dream sequence in *American Werewolf*. Below: King Kong does his stuff in the remake.



Yeah. I really felt sorry for the poor guy, being involved on this picture with the people he was involved with and he looked like he aged ten years during that year. He was always really good to me.

*I think he was just wrong for Kong. He's a great action director.*

Well, a lot of that too was that he had other people he had to account for things and they said well "This is how we want it to be done, you know." But yes, I think they might have gotten somebody who may have had more of a feel for that film. But their attitude was that it was another disaster movie, and then later on after the movie was finished they were going on about "Oh, we've made a poem, it's Beauty and the Beast, and it's so lovely," etc. I thought it was real disappointing. The first thing I heard about somebody doing a remake of *King Kong* was from Landis. He said, "Hey, somebody's going to remake *King Kong*," I said, "Hey, no kiddin', wonder what they're gonna







do." He said, "I don't know, some Italian guy." I didn't even know who Dino De Laurentiis was, to tell the truth. I thought well, they're really going to screw this one up. Then when I heard they wanted to talk to me I really had mixed feelings. I went in with a friend of mine, John Berg. John was up at ILM, did a lot of the stop motion animation on **Empire Strikes Back**. Well, John and I went in together and we had the idea of making these people do a better job. I think we did because I think there are differences in the film because of my involvement with it.

*One last thing on playing gorillas. When you get into a gorilla suit, how do you stop being Rick Baker and start thinking "Gorilla"?*

It's very strange. First of all you have to do what I used to do on **Kong** all the time, which was completely tune out. In between takes you have to go up someplace deep inside your head so you don't go nuts because you've got more than fifty pounds of weight hanging on you, it's incredibly hot and the heat builds up. It's like having a wet suit on that's six inches thick. But **Kong** was also very difficult because of the pain I had wearing those contact lenses, trying to act.

*Could you see very much through the lenses?*

No, not really. Double images, etc. It was really hard to hit marks. I definitely do get into the part though. Especially when I played Sidney, because I felt much closer to Sidney and it was much more the way I wanted to do a gorilla in a film, only I wanted to play



him a little more realistically. The way we were going to do it with John was the first time you saw Sidney for a while. It was straight gorilla mime stuff so you had no indication that he was a fake gorilla. Then he started to get in more and more of the stupid comedy takes which I think would have made it funnier.

Whereas now it starts right off with Sidney making a dumb face which I object to because it obviously isn't a real gorilla. But I do get into it. Rick Baker is kind of just somebody else then. I got fascinated by makeup and stuff. I was a really shy kid. If you put something on my face so I didn't look like Rick Baker, I could do something that Rick Baker couldn't do. If I had a whole suit on I could do a lot of things that Rick Baker couldn't do.

*What great gorilla actors do you admire, because there have been for example, Bull Montana in **The Lost World** and Charlie Gamera.*

Charlie Gamera was my idol. It was Dick Smith and Charlie Gamera. I think Charlie was the only other guy besides me that made a suit that cared about gorillas. I really don't know anything about him—whether he really liked gorillas or not. He did at least do some research and made a gorilla that was as accurate as he could make it. There are a lot of other people who have made suits. George Barrows for example who made the suit in **Kong**. That was a pretty decent suit, but I don't think it looks as realistic as Gamera's did. He did have arm extensions on it at one time to try to get the proportions better. But there were a lot of compromises in it. Maybe he wasn't the artist that Charlie Gamera was.

*And this was, of course, in the days before you could do so much with facial expression.*

Well, Charlie did have mechanisms in his mask. They were simple. The lips went up a little, but the materials weren't what we have now. But I'm sure his suits were all hand knotted that way Sidney was done, he had arm extensions that worked slightly. He also "ad" in **Phantom of the Masque**, some liquid-filled thing or heavy weighted padding because it moves around with him when he's up in the trees. You see

the weight move, which really added a lot. Charlie always had, I think, a feel for that stuff.

*I always thought that was both an underrated gorilla and an underrated film.*

I like it too and the gorilla's great. Did you ever see

**The Monster and the Girl?**

No.

That's one of his best. It's a strange film.

*How did you get involved in **Star Wars**?*

**Melting Man** and **Star Wars** came at the same time. I had friends working on **Star Wars**. I was really tight with all the stop motion animators working on it. We'd see each other daily and go out in the evenings and have fun together, etc. Dennis Muren was one of the guys in this group and Dennis was shooting some of the miniature effects. George Lucas came back from England and said, "what you want to do is shoot some of that stuff," and Dennis said "I know some people real good for it." So George found out the names of the other people. I went in with my work and I think what got me the job was that I was real enthusiastic and it sounded like the kind of movie I wanted to work on.

*Apart from **Kong** it was really **Star Wars** that gave you fame, wasn't it?*

Oh yes. My disappointment about **Star Wars** was that we couldn't do it as well as we wanted to because of the time because we had so much opportunity to do some really great stuff.

*Was it only the Cantina sequence you worked on?*

Yes. And what you see in the Cantina sequence isn't all my work. That was originally shot here and Stuart Freeborn did it. Stuart got all towards the end and George wasn't crazy about some of the stuff.

*Am I correct in saying they shot a lot of the Cantina sequence here and did other closeups in the States?*

Yes, they built part of the set there.

*Was that your work, the maternal shot in America?*

Any time you just see aliens sitting around a table that's mine. If you see a bar, that's Stuart's. The Cantina band is mine.

*Do you make any other things like that?*

No, I don't at all—it's something we're working on. I've designed several things for films that have made millions of dollars for other people besides me. All the individual inserts, in fact the first few shots you see of the Cantina are my things. There's this kind of "T" head thing you see sitting there drinking. There is one thing I think is pretty interesting. Greedo, the one that speaks with the subtitles, is one that Stuart made and that was George's favourite. It didn't do anything originally, and George said, "Do you think you could make that move?" So we made a mechanism for it. Then they reshot Greedo's two closeups in L.A. and cut it together with the two shots that were done here. It took months to produce it and you'd never know it was done in two different places by entirely different people.

*What did you do after **Star Wars**?*

I did **The Fury** some time after **Star Wars**.

*Was all the special makeup yours?*

No, Dick Smith was a consultant on that film. I made most of the appliances and Bill Tuttle put most of it on. The dummy of Cassavetes that blows up at the end I made, and there's a dummy of Fiona Lewis that bleeds that you really can't see—it could have been a mannequin—that's the one that spins. I made appliances for Fione that bled.

*Did you do the pulsing veins?*

Dick made those.

*Are they "moles"?*

They're the same type of thing. They're actually different materials.

*Who invented the mole?*

That was Dick's idea. Dick is actually responsible for most of the things we call Special Makeup Effects. Dick is the father of that stuff. Like in **The Godfather** he developed new ways to do bullet hits on skin, that type of thing. He's really great at developing new materials and finding uses for them, coming up with new formulas, etc. Once again, he shares the information. Dick will tell me something and I'll think "Hay, I could use that—only this way, for something else." I'll tell him something and he'll use it another way. We bounce back and forth between each other, and it's just for the good of the art, so to speak.

Above left: Rick Baker in his gorilla costume for the King Kong remake. Left: Another shot of the Kong costume.

# the thing



It has always been John Carpenter's dream to remake that classic horror thriller, *The Thing* (AKA: *The Thing from Another World* a production of Carpenter's admitted hero, Howard Hawks. After gathering a devoted cult following for such films as *Dark Star* and *Assault on Precinct 13*, Carpenter found a wider audience with the trend setting *Halloween*, the generally under-rated *The Fog* and the futuristic actioner, *Escape From New York*. With *The Thing* Carpenter has, for the first time, the facilities of a major studio (Universal) behind him and a healthy enough budget to accommodate his desire to create the ultimate in movie monsters.

Along with such amenities, John Carpenter's *The Thing* (as the title rightfully reads) has the benefit of a superb script by Bill Lancaster (author of the wonderful *Bad News Bears*). It has often been the weakest aspects of Carpenter's previous features, all of which sported director-penned screenplays (save *Dark Star*, co-written with Dan O'Bannon). But Lancaster has here returned to the original short story by John W. Campbell, *Who Goes There* - published in 1938 - rather than to Hawks' thirty year old film version. The major difference between the original novella and the 1951 RKO release was the monster, or *Thing* itself. Where Campbell had fashioned his story around a shape-changing creature capable of becoming any of the men stranded in the Antarctic research station, Hawks' film formalised the situation and had his team (supplemented with a female to allow for some typical Hawksian sexual banter) up against James Arness in the form of a humanoid alien. Arness' monsters' great ability was that it could regenerate any damaged tissue. In one grisly sequence the scientific side of the team takes some alien tissue, plants it in neat rows, feeds it on blood plasma, and watches it grow, apparently hoping to raise a clutch of little Things.

But with Carpenter avowed *not* to simply remake his hero's interpretation of Campbell's story, it was up to Lancaster to take key elements from Campbell and weave a version for 1982 audiences. Under the guiding hands of producers David Foster and Lawrence Turman the collaboration is a total success. For I'm happy to report that not only is *The Thing* John Carpenter's best film to date, it is also that rare bird, *An Instant Classic*. Although I'm sure it may take some time to realise its potential audience due to its relentlessly grim nature and high physical disgust factor, *The Thing* reaches new heights in the portrayal of screen horror.

In some ways *The Thing* might be taken as a sequel to the original film for two key sequences from Hawks' are repeated in this version. The famous shot of the team discovering the alien saucer in the ice. To gauge its size they form a circle around it, arms outstretched. Carpenter reprises the scene in a grainy black and white video tape found in the ruins of a Norwegian camp, previous hosts to the monster. The new team visit the derelict camp and there MacReady (Kurt Russell) discovers and slab of ice, a large hole thawed in it - another key image from Hawks.

Millie aside, that's about the sum total of the debt to Hawks, though purists may care to argue that Lancaster's screenplay occasionally attempts to capture some of the Hawks flavour within dialogue scenes.

*The Thing* opens with a chase. A lone husky is pursued across the snowy wastes by a helicopter, the men aboard attempting unsuccessfully to shoot it down. It makes its way to a neighbouring American research station, where in a confused melee both occupants of the helicopter are killed, the craft destroyed and the dog welcomed into the camp. Of course, the dog is *The Thing* and pretty soon it has infected all the dogs in the kennels, and in the first of several increasingly startling sequences reveals its true nature. To try to describe the various forms of the creature is next to impossible, for each time it emerges from its victim/host it displays characteristics of its previous incarnations as well as its alien self. As Campbell wrote it, so is it here. *Anyone* of the team can be the Thing at any time. Paranoia is the name of the game, and Carpenter captures the fear of depersonalisation and *Thing-ness* perfectly.

Rob Bottin's effects can only be described as brilliant and to say too much about them would be grossly unfair. All I will say however is, **YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE YOUR EYES!** With *The Howling* Bottin showed, that as a pupil of Rick Baker, he had inherited much of the master's talent and skills, although displayed a simple crudeness out of keeping with Baker's tight and meticulous attention to detail. Take a look at the transformation scene in Dante's low budgeter and then compare it to Baker's masterwork in *American Werewolf* and you'll see what I mean. But when Oscar night rolls around next year, it has to be Bottin up on that stage accepting the accolade.

In keeping with the grim and claustrophobic nature of Campbell's story, *The Thing* fully realises its potential as a thriller of nightmare proportions. The all male team are sketched in patchily, with an obvious emphasis on the characters who are going to last longer than others. The nominal hero, played by Russell, is as scared as the rest, thereby making the proceedings as unsettling as possible. Even he could be *The Thing*. An extended sequence in which he tests everybody's blood, knowing that *any* tissue which belongs to *The Thing* will react violently when its existence is threatened, along with being pure Campbell, surely rates as one of the most suspenseful scenes in genre history.

Other technical credits are also top-notch. From Dean Cundey's crystal sharp photography, which gives the film an odd semi-documentary look, to John J. Lloyd's atmospheric production design, *The Thing* radiates class-A production values. Veterans Albert Whitlock (Special Visual Effects) and Roy Arbogast (Special Effects) provide their usual high standard work and the eerie semi-electronic score by Ennio Morricone is a constant delight.

Although the horror effects represent a new dimension in mainstream cinema grossness, *The Thing* is in fact very measured in its building of suspense. Though there are thrills aplenty and more gore than I can remember seeing in any movie, Carpenter has brought Lancaster's script the solid story telling virtues of a master film maker. After the abysmal longeurs of *Halloween 2*, it does my heart good to be able to write those few lines. For with *The Thing*, John Carpenter has truly established himself as a director of the first order. As I hopefully predicted when I reviewed the flawed *Escape From New York* last year, John Carpenter, with this film, has finally arrived. Miss at at your peril! ○



This page: A selection of scenes from John Carpenter's harrowing horror/science fiction offering *The Thing*. The picture stars Carpenter's *Escape* from New York and TV *Elvis* lead, Kurt Russell.



# "THE GHOST OF SLUMBER MOUNTAIN"

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# THE BLADE RUNNER CHRONICLES



Interview by  
Phil Edwards /  
Alan McKenzie

## IVOR POWELL



It was really quite natural that Ivor Powell should find himself working in the film industry. Nephew of famed film critic, Dylis Powell, Ivor at age sixteen attempted unsuccessfully to break into the business. He became involved in the world of the theatre on the stage management side, working for various companies. From there he entered documentary film making and made an early foray into tv commercial production. Following a year with BBC 2 he became involved in the pop music field running various groups.

At the age of 22 he finally got the break he had been looking for, working in the art department for a film called *Journey to the Stars* as a producer's assistant. Of course *Journey* turned into *2001 A Space Odyssey* and after getting to know the mercurial Stanley Kubrick moved on to work as a special effects co-ordinator and assistant director on that ground-breaking production.

Following 2001, Powell found himself serving duty as production manager and location manager for such films as *The Optimists of Nine Elms* and *The Adventurers*. A couple of *Carry On* features provided the producer with what he calls, "an education", due to the tight nature of budgeting and scheduling for those extremely successful films.

He started to work in the burgeoning field of commercials as an assistant director as well as contributing to the David Puttnam documentary *Memory of Justice*. It was while he was involved with this project that he met Ridley Scott, then the master of the slick tv commercial. A healthy working relationship developed and Powell became an integral part of RSA (Ridley Scott Associates).

Then came Scott's first feature film, *The Duelists* and then *Alien*. Powell worked on both these as associate producer and Scott's right hand man. After *Blade Runner* Powell felt that it was time to branch out and he is currently in partnership with director David Ashwell. **Starburst:** How did *Blade Runner* come about? I saw *Alien* again recently and the thought occurred to me that it may have been inspired by the Ash sequence.

**Ivor Powell:** Funny enough, when Ridley was cutting *Alien* he received a script, from producer Michael Deeley, which was then called *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. I think. He told me what a terrific script he thought it was, and that he knew exactly how to do it. We have both been fans of *Heavy Metal* magazine for a long time. There was a story in that by Dan O'Bannon and Moebius (Jean Giraud) about a detective in 21st Century New York who went around blowing people away, and it was always the very image that Ridley tried to get into *Blade Runner*. Vast long corridors in mega-blocks of apartments and so on. He sent the script back to Michael Deeley along with a copy of this comic strip. He told him it was too close, and that he didn't necessarily want to do another picture about androids and not necessarily another hardcore sf movie now. We went onto *Dune* and other things including *Knight*, a medieval film that Ridley desperately wants to do.

**Is that the same project as *Darkness*? (Now retitled *Legend*)**  
No it isn't. *Darkness* is a Dark Age fairy story, nothing to do with *Knight* at all. But a year later, when we still hadn't really cracked the script of *Dune*, tragically—as I still think Ridley is the one to do that, and *Knight* hadn't worked out. It's a case of having the script right. You might have some problems that can be worked out later. But if you are discerning then you can't take time out to rewrite scene or dialogue with 250 people waiting on you.

**Would you say that the majority of problems that occur during shooting can be traced back to script stage?**

Yes, if it is humanly possible, one must sort out the script, take as much time as you can. We spent nearly a year pounding away at the problems on *Blade Runner*.

**How did the script chores breakdown between Hampton Fancher and David Peoples?**

Hampton Fancher wrote the original. David was brought in at a much later date, when Hampton was, quite frankly, exhausted after working on this for a year or two before we came along. He had the ▶

**Below:** Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) is informed by Gaff (Edward James Olmos) that he is wanted at Police Headquarters.





property along with a friend of his named Brian Kelly and they took it to Michael Deeley. It was very similar in a way to *Alien*, in that one of them had acquired the rights to *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, and Deeley was interested enough to give them some money to go on with it. The script that Ridley first got was the Hampton Fancher one, which for me, in many ways had a lot of material in it that I liked, although it's a different movie.

*Was it closer to Dick's original novel?*

In a way, yes, because there was much more emphasis on the animals and the fact that there were no more real animals left. I think it's unfortunate that it's now really thrown away in the film as it is. Unless you know Dick's premise you aren't really aware that all the animals you see are replicants.

I'm afraid it is. Originally Deckard was a character whose great desire was to own a real sheep. He has a robot sheep grazing on his roof and he would go and talk to it. And then he would go and look in this expensive pet show window and look at a real one that he wanted to buy. It was his great ambition in life.

*I'm not sure that would have worked on film, it's a lot to expect of an audience to believe that this guy is doing all this because he wants a real sheep.*

I don't think it would have worked on film. I probably have appeared a bit stupid. Hampton Fancher is a very romantic writer and in his original script the relationship between Deckard and Rachel was much stronger and in the end she realises that there isn't much future for them because he's human and she's a replicant. She is standing on the roof and he realises that she might be going to do something stupid and he rushes to her. He gets up onto the roof and she's standing on the edge of the roof holding onto the real sheep that he's bought. There's a quite moving conversation between them in which she compares the old android sheep with the way she is feeling. He thinks she is going to throw the real sheep over the edge, but she hands it to him and as she does steps back and falls off the roof, committing suicide. A very powerful scene. He hops into his Spinner and zaps out into the desert wastelands which surround the city and sets down. When he is sitting there just staring at the sands he sees a movement, which of course surprises him as there is no real animal life apart from zoos and private collections. A tortoise crawls out of the sand and he flips it on back and he just watches it for hours, like from dawn till dusk, watching this little animal trying to flip itself over, and it finally succeeds and goes waddling off. This, symbolically, says to him, that humanity is going to make it.

*It's interesting that the reference to the tortoise still survives in the **Vaight-Kampf** interview with Leon.*

Yes. I always thought that scene was wonderful, but it's probably hardcore sf fanatic thinking. It probably wouldn't have worked on the big budget scale, or worked for a general audience. It may have worked in a cheaper, under ten million dollar movie, where you can afford to take those kind of risks. I still have a great affection for that original screenplay—I like it very much. But on the other hand, there were some things in Hampton's script which were unacceptable. For instance, Deckard just arrives at Zora's place without an explanation as to how he got there. Peoples and Ridley introduced this chain of events with the snake-scale that Deckard finds in the bath tub. I think that's where Peoples came in. To write that kind of stuff, street dialogue. Originally Gaff had a lot of street dialogue which was multiple pidgin English, like six languages in one—21st Century gutter talk. Ridley does try to cram his canvas full of everything Peoples did clarify, and help, certain areas along.

*Was it a case that Peoples "polished" Fancher's script, or was his input greater than a "polish" job?*

If you had to say that one person has got to get a screen credit, I suppose if I were Solomon, I'd have to say Hampton Fancher has to, because he was the one that found it and in a sense was the one who did the original material and has done the most work on it. On the other hand, David Peoples, who is a terrific writer, a real sf writer, has done a lot of wonderful stuff with it and stuck with it. The screen credit now, as I see it, is very fair.

*I've heard that there were several sequences planned for **Blade Runner** which didn't make it into the final script. Can you tell me about any of them?*

There were a couple of important scenes, I think, that were not shot. There was one beginning scene which was talked about, which was in an early script, that was never able to be shot because of finance and the fact that costs in America were escalating. It was a beginning scene that Ridley was always very keen to do, of which there were two variations. The final variation was a scene which established the Nexus 6 replicants. Imagine something like the massive pit excavation in 2001 and there was a massive high-tech furnace at one end and there was this mountain of bodies which were being shovelled onto a conveyor belt and fed into a furnace, it looked something like a load of mackerel being poured out of a trawler. And then out of this pile of bodies emerged Batty and the other replicants. And they "cream" the workers down there. I had a vision, although it wouldn't have been possible unless the actual site was on the moon, of Batty—rather like Moonwatcher in 2001—looking



upwards and actually seeing the Earth. He knew that that was his target, his destination. It was where his creator was. The reason it wasn't in the movie was that it would have cost a couple of million dollars to do and we already had enough footage and time. It's like *Close Encounters* with that stunning opening of the planes being found, instead of opening it with the close encounter on the radar screen. Maybe we should have done. Who knows. The box office and the public will ultimately tell us. That sequence was written by the David Peoples side of it.

That other opening scene (written by Hampton Fancher) showed a sort of farmscape—one of those mid-America, endless farmscapes—and a massive tractor tilling the soil. A Spinner zaps in and arrives and lands and out steps Deckard. The farmworker notices him and Deckard walks towards this very old fashioned farmhouse. Inside, he looks around—there were photographs, clothes and soup cooking on the stove. The big bulky farmhand starts walking towards the house—he's like 6 foot 6 inch to 7 foot tall, the boardwalk outside the house literally sinks beneath his weight. He asks Deckard what he wants. Then he makes an aggressive move towards Deckard who pulls his gun and blows him away. Deckard goes over to his body, heaves him over—and this is a real Ridley-ism—just pulls out his bottom jaw bone and sees a number stamped on it. What it was, was a demonstration of what a *Blade Runner* does. The farmhand had been like a Nexus 2 or 3 that had been a runaway, and Deckard had tracked him down. I'm not sure that this comes over anymore because it's no longer an integral part of *Blade Runner*, that it established that there had been runaways of various Nexuses over the years, and that why they had to have *Blade Runners*. In the early days it was a case of tracking down these things which were not very human, and couldn't pass for human with a parchment like face. You couldn't see the nuts and bolts but they were primitive, so it wasn't too hard to blow them away. But as they became more and more sophisticated more and more like you and I, then the job became more and more repellent. So I guess that's why Deckard finally went into retirement, and that's the point where we catch him.

#### *How was Blade Runner set up?*

When *Dune* and *Knight*, which was to be done with EMI, didn't work out, we went to the States and met with Michael Deeley, who is very good on the financial side because of his dealings with EMI and British Lion. He had this script, which I think may have been with other directors before Ridley, and he went to "war" with the majors. He got a deal pretty quickly with Filmways, so out we went, and at that time Ridley wanted to make a movie in America. This was about a year after *Alien*, I guess. So we started work on the script and during the year before we actually started shooting, there were three, maybe four drafts of the screenplay which finally became *Blade Runner*. The title actually came from an obscure science fiction paperback called *Blade Runner*, which took its title from the William Burroughs. This paperback had something to do with doctors in the future where medicine and doctors are banned. There were these illegal doctors who went out to administer medical help to people, and the people who supplied them with their instruments when they ran out, were called "blade runners." Hampton Fancher gave that name to Deckard in the script, as his code name. I'm not sure whether it was Hampton or Ridley who came up with the idea of calling the movie *Blade Runner*.

#### *How was the decision reached to shoot the film in LA?*

It was primarily after getting Filmways as the major and the distributor, the problem was how to shoot it. Despite all the location scouting we did, there was no one place that had the concentration of architecture that was right. As always with a film like *Blade Runner*, it comes down to how you are going to crack the script, how you're actually going to make it work, how the logistics are going to work and how they are going to work within a price. The budget was gradually being pushed upwards and Filmways, I guess, were being carried screamingly along with it, and though we were unaware of it at the time had tremendous financial and cash-flow problems.

#### *What was their belief in the project? Was it one hundred per cent belief?*

Oh, they believed in the project, very much, yes. But I don't think they had the money for a twenty million dollar movie. It went from a twelve to thirteen million dollars, which was totally impractical, right up to a twenty million plus movie. We finally convinced everybody to do all the effects as models, I always believed that was the way to do it.

#### *So how did the film change from a Filmways project to becoming a Ladd Company production with release through Warners?*

Finally, Filmways collapsed, and Michael Deeley, very cleverly I think, turned the picture around to Tanoem and to the Ladd Company, in a very short space of time and we went through that terrible hiatus where we were trying to hold the crew together—the directors strike was looming up for a certain date later on that year. We knew that if we didn't start the movie by a certain date, we would never start at all. It was one of those pictures that you know that if it didn't get made then, would never get made at all. It was a strange kind of beast of a picture. It wasn't every director's cup of tea. Finally the



cash-flow started and we got off. We had at that time attempted to do a budget. I'd done a quick budget which had come out at 17 to 18 million dollars to do the picture in England. But if we'd made the move to England, it would have been too late to beat the director's strike, which ironically never happened. So for that, and some other reasons we made the movie there, at the Burbank Studios. *I must say I think Blade Runner is the best designed of film ever. How much of that was Syd Mead and how much was Ridley Scott's input?*

Ridley and I had seen Mead's book *Sentinel* and a few weeks later we were on our way over to L.A. and were delighted to learn that he does work out of there and was available. I do think that a great deal of the design work like the *Voight-Kampff* Machine and the cars is Syd's, but the overall image, a lot of it, is Ridley's—the way he wants things to look. It's the two of them. The wonderful thing about Ridley visualising things is that he is an artist himself. So working with other artists, they respect him and he kind of pushes them to extremes that they might not otherwise have reached.

*What about the city-scapes? They reminded me very much of Metropolis—was that an influence?*

Not consciously, no. We were influenced by the work of an illustrator named John Harris, who has done some very nice stuff on cities of the future. It really is only an extension of what America is today. We first of all thought of shooting it on location in America. We did "reces" around places like Chicago, Dallas to see a lot of their new buildings, but there was really no way to make it look real. The other alternative was to go with models. I think using models now with all the advances in motion control techniques, has become so advanced. You can use the buildings the way Ridley did, in the opening sequence. We never intended to have as much "city" as ended up in the film, as after we shot the opening sequence we didn't have a lot of money left for that. Ridley got behind the camera and shot a lot of stuff, by using some of the models, turning them upside down, stripping them down and so on. There are certainly a few strange objects in there! I know that R2D2 is on the Mothership in *Close Encounters*, and I know we have a few odd things in this. He enhanced what the original street was, and what we originally had money for—he tripled it, making it a much vaster cityscape than what he had originally.

*How was Doug Trumbull chosen for the special effects?*

My wish was always to get Trumbull to do it and I talked to him originally. But he was tied up with *Fire*. We went in with John Dykstra, who I think is a very good technician, and he did a lot of work on it and in fact helped budget it. It all came out quite expensively, but the Ridley's storyboards were very expensive at that stage—I mean we were doing traffic jams in the air, incredible stuff really, things that had never been attempted before. So Dykstra's budgets for those effects were prohibitive. About the time that we were locking horns on that, to pull back the script and therefore pull back the effects budget, I heard that Trumbull was getting *Brainstorm* off the ground, and that he maybe wasn't going to do *Fire*. I got on

the phone to him—he's an old friend from 2001—and asked him if there was anything we could do. He told me that there might be. Finally we got the most wonderful deal with Trumbull where he was on a fixed fee. Yutich was on a fixed fee and all his crew and facilities were on our payroll. There wasn't an overhead in there—they weren't putting a huge mark-up on all their facilities and staff. Is that something that's fairly common?

Yes, I think it is. I think if you go to ILM, unless you're George Lucas, you'd get an overhead and mark-up in there and understandably so. Trumbull now has the only 65mm motion control set up, which is what he used in *Star Trek*. It allows to give you the quality of the effects that you see in *Blade Runner*, which I think are the best seen yet. Trumbull was only involved on a consultancy basis, because once it was decided how to do the effects, Ridley doesn't need somebody to hold his hand to explain how to frame something, and this and that.

*I think Harrison Ford is simply terrific in Blade Runner. As much as Raiders was sold on the strength of "the return of the great hero", I think Harrison is the return of the great movie star... almost like a Clark Gable.*

Hear, hear! I think he's wonderful, number one for me. Very professional, and very much a return to that kind of actor. He loves his craft and has no delusions of grandeur about him at all and he's great to work with. He has a very positive input on script, on how to do action scenes—terrific.

*How was Harrison Ford chosen and why?*

By popular demand really. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* hadn't come out then, so we didn't know if it was going to do well. We even at one time talked to Dustin Hoffman, and that would have been a totally different movie then. Dustin is not a macho character and he asked Ridley, "Why the hell do you want me to play this macho character? Why the hell did Ridley want Hoffman to play this macho character?" Because Ridley was searching for more than just a superficial macho film. He wanted a real character in there, and Dustin (as I understand it) put forward some wonderful ideas, but it wasn't the movie we were all talking about making. Finally, I think it came down to the fact that Harrison really just fit the bill.

*What was Harrison's input into Blade Runner?*

Well, obviously he was very good with all the action sequences. I think he was very practical about the script and some of the scenes. Just very sensible. He understands film making and how to help make a dodgy scene seem good. I think he is called upon to perform, to act more in *Blade Runner* than in anything else I've seen him in, certainly more than *Star Wars*. I think it's a very difficult performance. I think the scene with him using the *Voight-Kampff* is very good and the scene with Sean Young after that, when she comes to him is also very good. It's a very difficult part to play, because on the one hand as *Blade Runner* is a big, commercial action movie, you can't devote the time to characterisation and development to scenes that you could do in a smaller movie. ○



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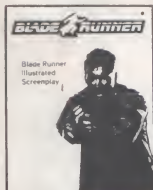
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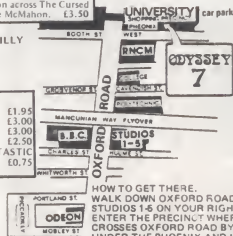
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So, where does one start? Well, yes, right, at the beginning. But then again, where does one finish? Projects announced in *Things* (even things announced in *Things*) over, let's say, the last twelve to eighteen months cannot yet be written off. They'll still make it to the screen, most of them.

Movies, as Erthe Kitt used to (h)ill about Englishmen, take time.

I can thank no less a lofty personage than The Fontz for providing the most recent example of what I'm getting at. At this year's Cannes beachfest, the lately resurrected Filmways combine (out for the count in late 1980 when it had to cancel *Blade Runner*) made a big thing (or Thing) of announcing a space movie called *Starlight One*. It's a supersonic *Airport*, really. About this Concordeish plane losing control but not height—it zooms up into earth orbit and all the passengers, all those glister-strumming black nuns, dying blonde tots, bickering old marrieds, sulking young marrieds, cowardly tycoons, drunken playboys, all the Emmannuelles up to somebody's good in the loos and Helen Hayes doing her stowaway bit again, have to be rescued by NASA's secret weapon, Les Meijors Jerry Jameson (who did *Airport 77*—or vice-versa?) is directing in L.A. orbit and has tasty Lauren Hutton around long enough for us to take our minds off minor Majors.

Now, that movie's title sounded familiar when I first found the Filmway handout and the 10 x 8 glossies of Lee and Lauren in my Cannes Press box. Once I'd checked the other credits and found Die Fonzie, Henry Winkler, listed as executive producer—well, it all came back to me in a flash. Ground. I've since looked it up and sure enough... I first mentioned Winkler's plan to get *Starlight One* into orbit in my column in *Starburst* 11.

And that, my friends, was way, but oh way back, in mid-1979... I

(Chorus) Films take time.

*Blade Runner*, of course, was first mooted as a movie (and immediately muted by Philip K. Dick) in 1973. John Boorman spent most of his career trying to win approval and backing (one is no good without the other) for his *Marlin* which became *Excalibur*, and indeed *Excalibur* to some *Conan* was a mere 15-million dollar weakling when I first reported on the movie deal in 1978 (he grew, barbarously, to 30 million dollars). And *Dune* was supposed to have begun shooting in the summer of '79... where the hell is it now, Dino?

Long-range planning doesn't always make a movie happen. Spielberg's right-hand men, Joe Alves, who designed Bruce and production designed *Close Encounters*, *Jaws* and Carpenter's *Escape From New York*, also spent the last six years prepping a movie called *Weatherman*. He still hasn't got a go-ahead on it. (Yes, Steve should help, I agree).

Then, of course, there are films that were announced early on in *Things* and alas and eek were actually made. *The Shape of Things to Come* (which gave this column's title a rotten name for months!) and *Phobia*, to name but two.

Both were made in Canada. Perhaps that's why they tank?

And there are, naturally, opposite instances where movie plans were highlighted in the column and looked real hot to trot... and have still never reached any screens in the Western world. *Thonger in the Valley of Demons*, is, perhaps, the most notable case. Milton Subotsky's signing of Harley Coklis to handle that number first made *Things* in *Starburst* 5 (long before it was Cimonated out of the way by the cost of *Heaven's Gate* and became, when last mentioned, an animation movie idea).



Around the same time as Subotsky's news, directors as varied as Alan Parker, John Frankenheimer and even Ralph Bakshi were being considered to helm *Conan*. John Milius was off the project as writer and/or director in *Starburst* 3's column—May, 1978, in our first, tentative bi-monthly days—when producer Ed Pressman was saying how the film, minus a film-maker or not, would "look closer to Tolkien than *Star Wars*."

Perhaps even more than Lucas and Spielberg, though, the one person most often named here is probably old John Carradine, now filming Pat Walker's *House of the Long Shadows* in London with Cushing, Lee and Price. John was 76 in February. "He'll probably die in front of the camera," Keith Carradine told us once. "He'd rather die et see Yechting is his great love". Other British lapses (or lapsed options, or lack of interest) include three from producer-director Stanley Long's *Alpine* set-up. Having begun to distribute the Cronenberg organs over here, Stan was about to get into the same ect himself with *Brainstorm* (not the Doug Trumbull script), *Plasmod* and *The Hypnotist*. They just didn't happen. Stan got into video instead.

But all of this is the exact function, the very nature of *Things to Come*—whether they do come or don't. This is our news column. All the news that fits, whether it's fit for our genre sensibilities or not... such as all those Italian rip-offs, most of which don't get made, not to mention all those Rome directors with such wonderfully sounding english names as... well, do you remember... Jules Paradiso?

News changes, often within 24 minutes, forget hours, of my hearing it, checking it and writing it—let alone the time it takes in setting it up in type and finally publishing it a month (or two) later.

(New Chorus) Publishing also takes... time.

This will then explain—to Andrew Campbell, of Wokingham, if no one else (see his letter, issue 44)—why sometimes, and I like to think not that often, you've read or heard the news elsewhere before glomming it here. Or in Andrew's case, seen it—*Close Encounters* on the box before my story about

tooling it—zitch all the same (I've not heard very much lately of their plans to sequeise *Good With The Wind*, either—though I figure it'll happen next year though not with Burt Reynolds but Tom Selleck, the actor who couldn't get free from tv to become Indiana Jones and is fast being touted as the new Gable).

We've also noted the fall of Lord Lew Grade, who deserved all he got for treping filmgoers like mindless teep-ingestors and the welcome rise of Carpenter, Cronenberg(?) and Romero and, but of course, Stephen King. Everyone and his wife has apparently bought rights to a King book or short story or paragraph or a page turn from his scribble pad. Presumably the almighty flopper of *The Shining* (not the King's fault) curtailed much interest in making some of these ventures. Producer Oodi Fayed has, though, perleyed a Universal deal for *Firestarter*, to be directed by Carpenter. But I've not heard fresh news on the Thormorged Subotsky's plans for *Fright Night* and *Terror By Daylight*, nor of the odder news that Stanley Oonen had bought *Dead Zone*. After *Saturn* 3, Sten should stick to his musclics... ot mending holes in the road. And et Cannes '82, the *Giro City* producers, David Payne and Johnny Fielder, said their projects including "two new scripts by Stephen King" (News to him).

Steve King has so many books and tales written, bought and sold to movie-makers, I expect him any day to take over the strip cartoon company name of King Features Syndicate. They are the people who own the *Mandrake The Magician* strips first mentioned a possible magic movie back in 1980. It's happening about now and my interview with the makers is among the things to come in *Starburst*'s next 50 issues.

*Mandrake* looks like making it (end better than the terrible tele-pilot from Universal sometime ago) but apart from suggestions about Burt Reynolds (Tom Selleck, today, no doubt) there's no fresh news on the film due from Milt Caniff's *Terry and The Pirates* strip, and this despite a script by Hitchcock's best scribe, John Michael Hayes. Nothing more on *Brenda Starr*, *Reporter 'For 40 years America's No. 1 comic strip heroine'* (which isn't saying much, how many comic-strip heroines are there in America?)

Incidentally, at the end of our first year of publication, Popeye was on go-status... with, remember this, Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin as Olive Oyl.

Then, there was some time, straight after John Landis withdrew, that Lily Tomlin looked to be out of *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* end Universal were reverting to a shrunken man idea... with would you believe, Jack Nicholson. Or Chevy Chase. Lily had the last laugh on that. And we had the big yawn.

Oh! there were other non-events, too. Whatever happened to the Six Million Dollar Man creator Martin Caiden's *Future Lab* and *The Mendelov Conspiracy*? Peter Sellers in *India's Alien*... John Stears' plans to raise Harry Saltzman's junked *Micronauts* off

its Christmas screening was able to be printed. That's just a matter of scheduling, printing, publishing and so on.

*Things* kicked off, along with *Starburst* in those first bi-monthly days, in January 1978. Straight from the off, I reported on some *twenty-six* productions (from the sublime to the Italian) being launched, worldwide, in the wake of the *Star Wars* breakthrough which started our trend. From the outset, we showed where we were going with the magazine and with my column. I said something to the effect that we wanted *Star Burst* (sic!) to stick around for a few decades, full of new movies as well as looking back on the classics and the stories behind their shooting and triumphs.

I think we've fulfilled all of that. We're simply waiting on our first decade, is self.

Of those first 26 movies (plus the news that hunts were on for a new *Jack Rogers* and *Flash Gordon*, both for television, and that the long-promised return of *Star Trek* was eer (or eye) marked for tv only), only a few were never made. The French, who don't have much luck in this area, obviously never located the key to *Star Lock*... and two years before his sad death, George Pel found scant interest in trying to set up *Return of the Time Machine* and H. G. Wells' *Off On A Comet* as tele-flicks. Nothing much seems to have happened with other plans to re-make *Pat's When Worlds Collide* and *War of the Worlds*.

For the record, *Collide* was once on the schedules of the Dick Zanuck and David Brown team which made *Jaws* and Spielberg. They'd had Anthony Burgess and Stirling Silliphant re-

the deck... Michael Crichton's film of his book, *Eaters of the Dead*... Not to mention, Travolta's production of *Conversations With A Vampire*... or Virginia Stone (Andrew's widow) and her 70mm special, *Galaxy*, complete with LaserVision effects... and oh, innumerable Italian quickies with such super-thrilling c'mon titles as *Blest of the Second Galactic Empire*?

As I browse through the old columns—did I really write all that?—I find *De Palma* still hoping to make *The Demolished Man* and in London...

Oliver Ungar aiming to go "beyond Lucas and Spielberg" with *Paradise Lost*... Loch Ness numbers announced in Italy and Australasia (didn't David Frost plan one once, or was he just securing the interview rights?)... Chris Lee due for a still unmade Canadian caper, *Moon in Scorpio*... Sigourney Weaver expected in Israel for *Madman*... and more strip notions like Paul Williams as *The Wizard of Id* (he's about the right size), while John Belushi had been rumored for *Alley Oop*.

That first column, so short!—also noted Richard Pryor's comedy brilliance in a US TV sketch about that most forgotten of all indispensable film roles—the barman. Pryor sent up the barman in the *Star Wars* cantina... four years before Joe Turkel made such a lowly role into a classic in *The Shining*. Joe comes back in *Blade Runner*, but I'm sure I told you that already. Rich Pryor, today, is the biggest box-office star in America (outside Lucas films) and is about to tussle with *Superman III*. We spot an early!

Very early. It was in the third *Starburst*, May 1978, that I had the first news of the definitive Terzan movie, *Greystone*, which is only now about to take off, under the deft control of the *Chariots of Fire* team, producer David Putnam (is there any other producer left in Britain?) and director Hugh Hudson, out of the same commercials, and indeed Putnam-boosted sponsorship that gave

us Alan Parker and Ridley Scott.

Even so, I can't see Ian Holm as Tarz, somehow...

And indeed, as Harrison Ford (bigger at the box-office as Indy Jones and Han Solo than Pryor, of course) was only telling us recently how he won't be in the fourth *Star Wars* chapter, it's intriguing to note that, also as early as my third column, that great *Starburst* fan, Mark Hemill, was making it clear that he'd signed for the first three films. (Why? Doesn't Yoda give interviews?)

Topping our first Fantasy Film Chart around then—the Galactic Top Twenty, I called it, until it grew to 200—was *Star Wars*, natch, with 2001 second and *Cosmo Encounters* third. *Planet of the Apes* was fourth. That just shows you what great strides fantasy movies have taken since 1978. *Apes* rests in our last chart at No. 48!

But then I am talking about an era when we still called her Farrah Fawcett-Majors...

Charting the colossal unprecedented rise of our kind of movies has been one of the great joys in writing *Things*, and indeed any other *Starburst* feature. As I pointed out in *Starburst* 30, which seemed as celebrating an issue as any to do it in, back in 1970 old films represented about 5% of world cinema business. By 1980, we'd bitten off 37% of the movie pie... and coming back for seconds. Those badmouthers who keep on saying "it's all over... any day now someone's gonna catch a cold..." are those who cannot get the money or the talent together to join the game. The disappointments along the way have been some (but not all) of the projects that never got in front of a camera... Michelangelo Antonioni telling us how his Russian film, *The Kite*, fell apart because "the special effects required were not available in Russia and the technicians I wanted became a cost I could not bear." The Japanese *maitre* Akira Kurosawa's Russian version of *The Masque of the Red Death* failed for

similar reasons. Coupled with Nic Roeg leaving his wondrous plans for *Dino Do-Dah's Flash Gordon*, these three non-events should top anyone's lists of tragedies in the area of fantasies that never were.

Julie Corman's long-delayed movie in Isaac Asimov's *Nightfall*, would be another, along with Doug Trumbull's *Millennium*. And much missed, on a lighter side would be Barrie Humphries in *Les Patterson Saves The World*... and National Lampoon's offer to shoot *Jews 3, People 0*.

On the other hand, one movie I'm rather glad didn't happen is *The Silver Surfer*. Don't get me wrong. I'm sure it could be a wow of a winner. Just not the way it was planned.—To star... Olivia Newton John!

There is, of course, no place better for films—on screen and on paper—than the Cannes film festival, which *Things* has covered in depth since 1979. American producer Sandy Howard had all the best posters for *Odysea* and *Brainstorm*; again, not the Trumbull film, but Sandy never shot the movies. Having lost his shirt, complete with all his buttons, on *Meteor*, he's now back to square one (times three) and making another *Man Called Horse* venture, which just might earn enough to save those other ventures.

Cannes '79 had Caroline Munro and Judd Hamilton flourishing the Cannon news about *Star Riders*, the sequel to *Star Crash*. They called it off. Cannon also said Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires* would be made. *The Prometheus Crisis* was sold to some territories because John Carpenter was going to direct it. He didn't. No one did. And at the end of it all, Ken Russell announced a definitive *Dracula*... Hahl!

In 1981, Cannon has signed the *Supermen* flyboy Zoran Perisic to make *Space Vampires* as *Space Intruders* (they'd gone up market) with George Peppard—missing from their lists this year! And there was Caroline Munro

shooting *The Last Horror Film* during the festival and spouting about *Stelle Starr* vs *The Space Pirates* for the same director, David Winters, with her *Maniac* co-star, Joe Spinell as the pirate. No one believed them. Ever one wuz right. Winters is making *Maniac II* with Joe instead. At least, that's what he said this year.

So I guess it's safe to say *Things* has covered it all since January '78. From the rumour of *Dino Do-Dah* trying to buy out Ilya Salkind's interest in *Superman*... to Dan O'Bannon's planned directing debut with *Assassin in Time*. (So what happened Oen?) I've made mistakes, like falling for the far distant hype of *The Black Hole* and saying "should be good"... calling *Halloween* dull, yet changing my mind to some readers' disgust (I thought that was being honest)... saying that Warner Bros wouldn't release *Superman II*. So I wuz wrong. But that's the way it was at the time in a mess of rumour and counter-rumour and Guy Hamilton named as the sequel's director when Richard Donner was dropped.

That Franco-German mess, *Possession* was first mentioned here as *Possessions*. It's about a woman who has an affair with an unmarried man that takes human shape—that much was right. But director Zulawski was spelled Volovsky. That could be my typing Esther Williams came out as Esthee Wukkasen in the same column. Why the old Metro mermaid in *Things* at all? Because Chris Reeve's *Somewhere In Time* was made on a Michigan Isle called Mackinac, last used for a 1946 Esther swim-movie.

But then I even ran a colour picture from *The Sound of Music* once...! Because the top cast had included Nicholas Hammond who grew up to be *Spider-Man*. Heather Menzies became the tv Jessica in *Logan's Run*, and Angela Cartwright came from *Lost In Space*.

That's what I like about our genre(s)!



tion of even the most extraordinary of science fiction extravaganzas. Audiences will find themselves in the great lot of the Universe—wide-eyed, ready and waiting for what lies beyond.—Disney studio hype on *The Black Hole*. We're still waiting...

"You don't make standard deals with these kind of people. People assume that to get Lucas and Spielberg together that you have to give them the lot—and your first born."—Paramount president Michael D. Eisner on *Raiders*.

"There's no exorcism, no levitations and no furniture flying!"—*Exorcist* author William Peter Blatty on a prequel called *Legion*. No deal, either, it seems.

"What George and I plan to do is scare an audience so badly and so continuously that after 120 minutes of cinema, the audience will almost

literally have to crawl out of the theatre!"—Stephen King on *Creepshow*.

—Miles O'Keefe on *Bo Derek*.

"I couldn't direct something like *The Towering Inferno*!"—Richard Marquand, director of *Revenge of the Jedi*.

"The studios do not realise that people have to be trained to be effective, no matter how talented they are. They think young film-makers are created by agents in a back room with a lump of clay."—George Lucas on the worth of the USC film school.

"A lot of people can write. I have to"—Isaac Asimov.

"I'm only doing the book. But Stanley will have first option. Although I think it will probably be unfilmable."—Arthur C. Clarke on the 2001 sequel.

## THINGS THEY SAID

"I find this extraordinary occupation and fascination with the theme or the character of Dracula quite understandable. It's a very romantic and heroic figure. But it's not being presented the way it should. I came nearer to it than anyone else, although it was still not right, as I've said on many occasions. So why would I be interested in playing it again? Of course, if a man like Zeffirelli asked me to do it and said it was going to be done word-for-word as Bram Stoker described it, I'd be tempted. But I would still say: Not At least, they'd have to pay me so much money, they wouldn't be able to afford to make the picture."—Christopher Lee on his *elfer-ago*.

"Screen sci-fi (*sic*), whether expensive or cheapjack, will soon be as common and as hackneyed as the Western. I decided I would get in sooner than later..."—Ridley Scott on *Alien*; apparently on *Blade Runner*, he's suggested the time is ripe for an sf. John Ford, and he'll be it. John Ford's Westerns weren't (all) hackneyed.

"We did like 68 takes for a shot of

Chris leaping off into flight correctly. Most of the time we just stand there, bending to the wind machine, while they throw birds past our heads."—Margot Kidder on *Super-delays*.

"We'll be putting on the screen what NASA would now be doing in terms of space stations and shuttles... if it had been given the money."—Cubby Broccoli on *Moonraker*.

"I fought against doing that like a madman! But it was the same old story. 'Look, we've drummed up 1.8 million dollars on your name.' Four times, I said, No. Last time I said, Okay, how long will it take? In fact, it's not a disgraceful film."—Richard Burton on *The Medusa Touch*. It could have been a hit with a better title.

"It's going to be a *Hellzapoppin* comedy. I've never done anything like it before. I might fall flat on my face like Peter Bogdanovich with *Nickelodeon*."—Steven Spielberg on *Nickelodeon*.

"There is an irresistible urge to improve it, expend it, stamp it with the personalities of the re-makers."—*Time*'s film critic Richard Schickel on re-makes. (How true).

"It will surprise the mind's concep-

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**TERRY**  
AND THE PIRATES

IN THE  
**TWO STARS**











explosions from his secret lab hidden beneath a dilapidated combine harvester. It is like the White Rabbit from Alice, continually on the move and always in some of the most

The omnipotent Owl who haunts an old mine deep in the forest is voiced magnificently by veteran screen actor John Carradine, and with massive glowing eyes is certainly as frightening an apparition to Mrs Brisby as Tomtekin is to the audience. *Fantasia's*



*NIMH* also heralds its return by using the nimble hand and camera for scenes requiring a touch, especially *Nicodemus'* magic. He is the most elegant and in the opening sequence of *Animals* with the aid of a black and white animation, the wise old rat beckons magic vases from an old well to grace the pages of an ancient book with gold lettering.

There is only one song and it's dealt with quickly, efficiently and with the minimum of fuss, without holding up the story in any way. The rest of the music score composed by Jerry Goldsmith supplies just the right amount of suspense and mood to complement the visuals. I can't recommend *The Secret of NIMH* more highly. It is the sort of animated feature that I've been awaiting for a long time for and I will certainly be going back for a repeat viewing. **C**

## AUTOGRAPH PAGE



Right: The very lovely Sybil Danning kicks off our 50th Anniversary autograph section in fine style. Enough said, we think!

Congratulations  
STAR BURST!

on your 50th.  
anniversary  
Syd Mead

HEAD  
7/7/82

Designer Syd Mead



Above: Actor Robert Forster as he appeared in the Disney picture *The Black Hole*.

Congratulations  
on the 50th Issue

Ridley Scott

Director Ridley Scott

Happy 50th  
Best Wishes

Robert Forster

Happy 50th  
Issue

Miles O'Keefe

Actor Miles O'Keefe

To  
the Happiest  
Fiftieth  
Anniversary  
Best Always  
Lou Ferrigno

Below: Actor Lou Ferrigno as he really looks without all that green grease paint.



All the best for the  
BIG 50 -  
STAY SCARED!  
George Romero

Director George Romero

Happy 50th, Starburst!

Stephen King

Writer Stephen King

# IT'S ONLY A MOVIE



Above: Kurt Russell (as MacReady) discovers the remains of John Brosnan at his typewriter in John Carpenter's *The Thing*.

I was a tough week. First *Pollergest*, which blew my socks off, and then *The Thing*. *The Thing* almost blew my dinner all over fellow reviewer Alan Jones who had the misfortune to be sitting next to me. I mean, this movie is sick! Lots of fun, yes, and full of shock horror moments that you won't forget in a hurry (some of the nightmarish imagery seemed to burn itself onto my retinas—I could see it for hours afterwards every time I shut my eyes) but basically it is sick. It goes about as far as it's possible to go with explicit gore effects—in fact it probably goes too far. At the time of writing it's just been released in America and is doing surprisingly badly at the box office, possibly because audiences are being turned off by the gore...

As an out-and-out, shock-at-any-cost horror movie *The Thing* is a 100% wow; but as a new version of John W. Campbell's classic science fiction novella *Who Goes There?* it's a disappointment. I was expecting big things from John Carpenter on this and now I feel badly let down. Even the 1951 version, as far removed from Campbell's original as it was, was a better science fiction film than this one. But I should have known what to expect when I read in *Cinefantastique* magazine that Carpenter's script writer Bill Lancaster (son of Burt) found that the novella's interplay of theories about the nature of the monster, and Campbell's philosophical speculation, were "confusing" and "would have bogged down the pace".

Well, *The Thing* certainly does have pace but that's about all apart from gore and shocks. It certainly doesn't have any sense of coherence. Despite the fact that the screenplay went through several revisions in order to clarify just what the monster was doing to whom, I still found it pretty confusing. There seemed to be so many bits and pieces of *Thing* on the loose I couldn't figure out just how many monsters there were. For example, in the sequence where we first see the *Thing*—after the fake "dog" has turned itself inside-out to cinematic first in *blechness*—I'm fairly certain I saw a part of the monster grow arms, detach itself from the main body and disappear out through a hole

in the roof. I spent the rest of the movie waiting for this bit to make a reappearance but it never did (perhaps it got lost on the cutting room floor). As the film progressed there seemed to be so many monsters on the loose I expected there would be a surprise ending in which everyone turned out to be the alien and that the last real human had gone in reel two.

I think it would have been better if Carpenter and Lancaster had restricted themselves to just one *Thing*, as well as making it clearer what exactly is going on when it attacks a victim.

I also think that Carpenter should have concentrated less on Rob Bottin's graphic gore effects, viscerally jolting as they are, and put more emphasis on mood and atmosphere. As it is this *Thing* doesn't exploit the potential of the story but just goes after cheap shocks of the crudest kind. Admittedly it's technically very impressive, and has a genuine nightmare quality to it, but in my opinion the Howard Hawks version is the superior of the two.

I'm sorry folks but I have to say it—Things just ain't what they used to be.

I don't want to brag (me?) but a friend and I handled the problem of a shape-changing monster much more logically than Carpenter and Co. In an outline we wrote a couple of years ago. Called *Shaper* it was set on an oil rig in the North Sea which had been converted into a secret genetic engineering laboratory. An artificial gene, designed to enable mankind to survive the effects of an atomic war, becomes a menace after it takes over the body of a test animal and goes on the rampage, absorbing all and sundry.

We'd been fiddling with *Shaper* on and off for some time without ever completing it to my satisfaction but then, a couple of months back, my agent told me she was submitting a few horror film ideas to director Norman Warren (*Inseminator*) and did I have anything suitable to hand? So I quickly finished *Shaper* and gave it.

Lo and behold, Warren and his partner liked it a lot and were just about to make an offer on the outline when they discovered

that a film called *PS* had just started production in Hollywood. Would you believe that *PS* was set on an oil rig? And that it had a blob-like monster on the loose? Well, it did and so down the tubes went *Shaper*.

When *PS* finally makes an appearance over here don't be surprised if my review of it isn't as generous as it might be.

Some time back a letter of mine was published in *Screen International*. As usual I was riding the same old hobby horse—ranting about the noise in British cinemas, the adverts, the boring "full supporting programme" syndrome. "When are British exhibitors going to take a leaf out of the book of their American counterparts and move into the 1980s?" I demanded.

Ironically, on the same page, was the following item in editor Peter Noble's *In Confidence* column: "Producer Harold Ram has just sold three half-hour supporting movies to Warners... all narrated by Pete Murray, the best of which is 'Pete Murray Looks At Hastings'." "There is a great market for half-hour films in the USA as well as in Europe", declares Harold.

I give up.

Finally a few words in praise of a movie that has received a bad press, even in the pages of this magazine. I'm referring to Paul Schrader's *Cat People*. To my surprise I enjoyed it immensely. It's not really a remake of the original version nor is it part of the current blood and guts cycle of horror movies (compared to *The Thing* it's a paragon of subtlety) but a rather dream-like, off beat fantasy that is more concerned in generating a mood of bizarre eroticism than in trying to scare the socks off you (though there are some scary moments). Nastassia Kinski is quite delightful as the virginal Irena who ends up shedding a great deal of fur, as well as her clothes.

Try and catch up with it if you can. I just hope you don't find it playing with "Pete Murray Looks At Hastings".



Summer is traditionally a quiet time of the year for publishers (I'm writing this in July) and new books are pretty thin on the ground at the moment. The best of the bunch I've read recently was a paperback borrowed from friends.



*The Land of Laughs* by Jonathan Carroll (Hamlyn, £1.75). This reads like a conventional realistic novel for at least half its length, then gradually starts developing elements of fantasy which grow more and more pronounced until... well, it would be a shame to give away the ending, especially since I haven't even told you how it starts yet.

Thomas Abbey, the son of a famous actor, is fascinated by the children's writer Marshall France, who led a reclusive life in the small town of Galen, Missouri, until his death. Several attempts to write France's biography have been vetoed by his daughter, Anna, who still lives in Galen, but when Thomas and his girlfriend turn up there they are accepted by the townsfolk and Anna eventually gives Thomas the go ahead to write the biography. But there's something teasing and mysterious about her, and all the townsfolk have an unnatural interest in the progress of the biography.

Thomas starts having an affair with Anna, but the mysteries deepen and he begins to suspect that he is being used in some way. He discovers that all the names of the characters in France's books can be found on tombstones in the Galen cemetery; a young boy is knocked down and killed by a truck, but none of the townsfolk show any remorse or shock but instead mutter that it shouldn't have happened this way; at dinner one evening, a girl's face is momentarily transformed into a character from one of France's fantasy books; and finally Thomas returns one day to find his housekeeper's dog sitting on the bed, talking to itself.

He pressurizes Anna and she finally explains everything, giving him her father's voluminous notebooks which conclusively prove that everyone in Galen apart from herself and one other person has actually been brought to life by France, who possessed the mysterious ability to make his fictional creations become real. Because of this, France spent his latter years writing a history of Galen for the next thousand years or so, a history which the townsfolk are now acting out according to his dictates. But France's written scheme has been going wrong of late, and Thomas's role as his biographer is designed to stabilize the scheme and also to bring France himself back to life. As the story builds to a climax, the creeping air of menace intensifies and it becomes clear that Thomas and his girlfriend are in grave danger, for with France's return their work will be done and they will become redundant to the town.

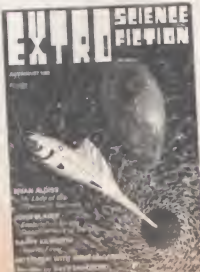
I've never heard of Jonathan Carroll before, but I'll certainly be looking out for his work in future. *The Land of Laughs* is not wholly successful as a novel, but it's intelligent, well characterized and written in a taut, muscular prose style with frequent deft descriptive touches. Thomas, the famous actor's son, has a strong love-hate relationship with his dead father and the Hollywood background is convincingly sketched in. Ultimately the novel is about the power of the imagination; as a child, Thomas preferred to live in France's fictional worlds than face the unhappy reality of his childhood; but now, as an adult, the fantasy becomes real and very unwelcome. If the book has a message, it's that to become fully mature, a person has to face up to reality; this may not be a particularly original proposition, but it's presented in a stimulating, distinctive and ultimately chilling manner, and the little twist at the end of the tale is a real treat which I won't give away.

A few months ago I mentioned the magazine *Interzone*, the second issue of which recently appeared. After several years when there has been no regular market for short science

fiction in this country, it's helped plug a gap. But it's not alone in this, for there's also *Extro* magazine, now into its third issue. *Extro* should really be thought of as a complementary magazine to *Interzone* rather than a rival, for it's angled towards the more commercial end of the market, with full colour covers, interior artwork, interviews and book reviews in addition to its quota of short stories. Whereas *Interzone* concentrates (rather too exclusively in my view) on the bare presentation of fiction, *Extro* conforms more to the traditional idea of what a science fiction magazine should be. The stories tend to lack polish and sophistication, and the magazine hasn't quite achieved a strong personality of its own as yet; but a lot of effort and energy clearly goes into its production and it's the kind of venture that should be supported. Issue 3, with stories by Brian Aldiss, John Sladek, Garry Kilworth and others, costs 75p (excluding postage) from 27 Cardigan Drive, Belfast BT14 6LX, or from specialist bookshops such as *Forbidden Planet*.

A recent press release from Savoy Editions informs me that its co-founder and director, David Britton, was imprisoned for 28 days for selling books which contravened the Obscene Publications Act. He's probably out of lock-up by now, so I hope he won't mind me saying that I was surprised to discover that the books in question weren't Savoy editions themselves. Savoy have published titles by Michael Moorcock and Harlan Ellison, but the two that most stick in my mind are *The Tides of Lust*, Samuel Delany's lurid and pretentious "erotic" novel, and *The Gas* by Charles Platt, which is much more fun because it never pretends to be anything more than pure, unadulterated porn. The anti-hero of the novel moves through a Britain filled with sex-crazed people whose libidos have been unleashed by the gas of the title. The consequences are predictable (one gang-bang after another) and I'll spare your tender sensibilities by not dwelling on them and will instead simply mention that it might still be possible to obtain copies of the novel from discreet booksellers. Dirty raincoats are optional.

On a more serious note, the imprisonment of Britton seems absurd to me. During the trial he attempted to establish what constituted obscene material, only to be told by the judge that the only way to avoid committing the offence "was not to make one's living by selling literature that could possibly be obscene". In other words, the judge wasn't prepared to specify the bounds of the act. The obscenity laws in this country have always been so fuzzy as to be open to reactionary abuse, and this appears to be a typical example of just that; it may be setting, as the press release points out, a worrying precedent.



In answer to my request a couple of months ago for additional information on television merchandising, I have received some letters from readers pointing out items I had forgotten, overlooked or lacked the column space to include. The most detailed letter came from Derann Film Services, who sent me a list of Super 8mm sound versions of some classic television shows.

Amongst the programmes originally on offer from Derann were highlights from episodes of *Jason King* starring Peter Wyngarde, and from *Department S*, episodes *The Trojan Tanker* and *Last Train to Red Bridge*. Each segment lasted 35 minutes and was distributed in attractive boxes by Techno film who are responsible for a large number of the Warner Brothers cartoons on 8mm.

Even Gerry Anderson's *UFO* was available in this format. Titles included *Cat With 10 Lives*, *Timelash*, *The Psychobonds*, the pilot episode *Identified and Exposed*. Other tv series listed are *The Champions* with a pilot episode neatly trimmed to a mere 35 minutes. (It actually looks better that way) *The Baron* with Steve Forrest, in episodes *Diplomatic Immunity* and *So Dark the Night* and in case nobody can remember it *Strange Report* with Anthony Quayle, of which two complete episodes are available, *Shrapnel* and *Hostage*. It was also possible to purchase two stories from Anderson's *The Protectors*: *2,000 Feet to Die* and *The Big Hit*.

highly collectible Dalek Rollykin from Marx Toys. This minute Dalek, less than 33mm in height, came complete with a ball bearing base and separate appendages. Packaged in an attractive little box it was released on the market in 1965 and is extremely rare. The same year Panther books published *The Dalek Pocketbook* and *Space Travellers Guide*, compiled and presented by Terry Nation and *The Dalek Painting Book*, which would then have set you back the princely sum of 12½p and if in mint condition considerably more today.

News from Channel 4 is that negotiations are under way to rescreen *The Prisoner* next summer. In the meantime, if you can't wait till then, Precision Video have released four episodes on tape. (Two episodes per cassette). Unfortunately they seem to have picked the shows at random, putting the first episode *Arrival* on the same tape as *The Schizoid Man*. This would be more acceptable if each story was individually recorded with its full end credits, but Precision chose instead to join them together, causing a continuity lapse as No 6 suddenly appears to relax in to his village environment in a matter of seconds. The second tape is entitled *Many Happy Returns* and also contains the superb episode *A, B and C*, and here fortunately the blend is much smoother. One disappointment however is that because the credits for both episodes have to be shown together at the end of the tape, the Penny Farthing assembling itself has been replaced by rolling yellow credits on a blue background.

Whilst on the subject of *The Prisoner*, it is interesting to note that during the Rover sequence at the end of *Arrival*, smoke appears to be going backwards into the chimney stacks on the buildings. This was due to the fact that most of the scenes involving Rovers were filmed in reverse for easier manipulation of the giant balloons.

To conclude this months column, a few words about ITV's recent *Best of British* series. Although in one review I read it prompted the writer to say, "If this is the best of British tv, I'd hate to see the worst," some of the programmes on offer weren't too bad. Of course we had an episode from *The Prisoner*, although it was hardly a good example of the series. It did however tell a definite story, so those unfamiliar with *The Prisoner* may have enjoyed it.

Roger Moore fared quite well in the episode of *The Saint*, even though it had the usual stock shot of the white jaguar plunging over the cliff. My only regret was that ITV didn't pick on one of the better shows from the series, such as *The House On Dragons Rock* written and directed by Moore himself. His other *Best of British* appearance was alongside Tony Curtis in *The Persuaders*, which didn't look so hot. Curtis played the funnyman and Moore a sort of long haired sophisticate even more over the top than in his numerous Bond portrayals. It was also apparent how dated the music seemed and also how depressing as well.

Amongst the comedy on offer was an episode from *On The Buses* starring Reg Varney. It's difficult to understand looking back why it was so successful and this same attitude must apply to the series *Please Sir!* starring John Alderton. This was an excellent show when it first appeared and the episode shown even featured the original Sharon played by Penny Spencer, who was later replaced by Carol Hawkins. The problem is that in 14 years since the series first appeared schools have changed so much that programmes such as *Please Sir!* are now more of historical interest and social documentation than examples of hilarious comedy. As contemporary series such as *Coronation Street* and other soap operas still use moral issues to put over a point of view, so it seems did these earlier comedy series. This was particularly evident in Sharon's dilemma over whether to share a room on holiday with her boyfriend Duffy played by Peter Cleall. This style of writing proved to be so successful that a spin off series appeared in 1971 entitled *The Fenn Street Gang*. According to the script writers the schoolkids had more more to get access to the viewers than the teachers.

More importantly when ITV were unknowingly writing their *Best of British* series the comedy cult of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *Where Was Spring?* and *Up Sunday* hadn't even begun. With the exception of *The Likely Lads* and *The Good Life*, perhaps the time is right for a "BBC Best of British." ○



Apart from the four episodes from *The Sweeney* starring John Thaw and Dennis Waterman, the most popular tv series released by Derann is now unavailable. *The Avengers* starring Diana Rigg. Episodes included *The Living Dead*, *The Return of the Cybemauts*, *The Positive-Negative Man* and sadly for hire only, *From Venus With Love*. I know of many collectors including myself, who would be more than happy to own their own copy of that one.

Other interesting items that have since come to light are the Sawyer Viewmaster slides from *Batman*, *Lost in Space*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Bonanza*, *Flipper*, *The Magic Roundabout*, *The Man From Uncle*, *Thunderbirds*, *Tintin* and *Top Cat*.

There were also an amazing number of Dinky and Corgi models based on tv shows available in the mid to late sixties, including some of the Gerry Anderson hardware, one of which was Lady Penelope's Rolls Royce FAB 1. It was also possible to buy versions of Steed's Vintage Bentley and Emma's Lotus from *The Avengers*, Napoleon Solo's Thrushbustler from *The Man From Uncle*, the Batmobile with bat boat accessory and from *The Saint* Roger Moore's Volvo. To identify it from other Volvo's Corgi included the famous Saint trademark on the bonnet.

In the case of *Doctor Who*, I neglected to mention the

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# FRANK MARSHALL

**L**ast issue (*Starburst* 49), producer Frank Marshall talked to Hollywood correspondent Bill Warren about his involvement with Steven Spielberg and George Lucas on *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and his work on other movies, ranging from Peter Bogdanovich's *Targets* (Karloff's homage to his own career) to Walter Hill's *The Warriors*. This month we concentrate on his latest project, *Poltergeist*, co-produced with superstar director Steven Spielberg.

**Starburst:** What kind of movie is *Poltergeist*? **Frank Marshall:** *Poltergeist* can best be described as a supernatural thriller.

"Supernatural thriller." You're avoiding the use of the term "horror film"?

Well, yes, because what "horror film" connotes today is exploitation, graphic violence. What Steven really tried to do in this movie was go against the genre. It's much harder and more of a challenge to do a scary movie without gratuitous horror, like cutting people's heads off, *et cetera*. That's a simple example, but we wanted to do it psychologically rather than right out in front. Some Hitchcock movies could be called "horror films"... well, we have made a movie in that vein, in that style. And that was our challenge. It's much harder to frighten an audience psychologically than with the old normal exploitation low-budget cheap horror stunts.

Does this allow for sequels?

Oh, of course!

While he was in high school, your makeup artist, Craig Reardon, did a makeup of me as the Hunchback.

Craig's terrific. He is a real talented guy, real talented. He had a couple of challenges here. He had one that's absolutely spectacular. It's a scene that's really a hallucination, but is definitely a shock. The other challenge for us, and one which Steven was brilliant at meeting was—well, we're all tired of the old haunted house, the surroundings that set up the terror.

You look at the house and you know it's haunted.

Or you've heard that there were seven murders committed there two years ago and no one's ever lived in the house, or it's by itself on the moors with fog around it, on a hill where—oh, you know. We're all conditioned to that, and we're all getting tired of it. What Steven did was put it in an everyday, normal

setting, a wonderful family that loves each other and lives in this house in suburbia, and it's normal, very normal. And it's so normal it almost becomes abnormal.

*Sort of like the family in Close Encounters before Roy Neary sees the saucers.*

Yeah. We have a husband who is a real estate salesman, who has sold the most amount of property in the development, where he lives himself. He's a real successful guy. Sundays he has all the neighbours over to watch football on TV. Mom is her own woman, she's very strong. The three children are very healthy and well-adjusted. It's a wonderful family; there's nothing weird. But they're victims of a poltergeist phenomenon.

"A" poltergeist? Somebody told me there's a whole bunch of hauntings going on.

There are. There's a difference between a haunting and poltergeist. Hauntings can go on for years, and poltergeist phenomena can be of very short duration. Often they're associated with teenagers and younger children. In our case, in the movie, the catalyst or conduit is the five-year-old daughter, Carol Ann. Basically, what we wanted people to feel is that this could happen to them, to anyone, and that's where we build up the psychological intensity. Make it totally normal, so the abnormal would stand out that much more.

How did you cast it? The names are not box office names.

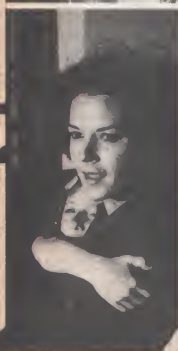
Another element in our plan was that we did not want to unbalance the story by having anybody that was so well-known that one would have a pre-conditioned stereotype or idea of who the character was. We didn't want to put—for example—Vincent Price in a role because you would know that he is the bad guy. We do have wonderful actors. JoBeth Williams, who plays the mother, comes from the stage in New York, and has had three or four smaller parts in films. She was actually in *Stir Crazy* with Craig T. Nelson, who's the father. They knew each other, they had acted together before. She's also in *Kramer vs. Kramer* and *The Dogs of War*.

Craig Nelson played one of the lawyers in *And Justice for All*, one of the opposing lawyers. He's now in a tv series called *Chicago Story*.

Then the kids. There's a real Hollywood story about the five-year-old Heather O'Rourke. Her sister Tammy, who was in *Pennies from Heaven*, was having lunch with Heather and their mom in the MGM commissary. Steven happened to be eating







there too, and looked over and said, "There's Carol Ann. Find out who that is." And she was cast that day. Never been in a movie before. *How'd she work out?*

*Terific. She's absolutely wonderful in the movie.*

*Spielberg seems to work pretty well with children in general.*

*He's great with children.*

*Which brings me to a question. There's been a lot of controversy that Tobe Hooper didn't really direct most of **Pottergeist**.*

Tobe was the director. Steven, having written the story, having acted as co-producer, wanted to have his vision realized on the screen. He had a very, very strong and heavy influence on every phrase of the movie, from the writing, to designing all the storyboards, to being on the set 97% of the time—he was

gone three days when we opened **Raiders** and he and George Lucas went to Hawaii—to the dubbing, to the special effects, to the advertising.

However, Tobe was there every day, and they worked very closely; it was a close collaboration. Steven had a strong hand in making the movie.

*Sort of like an old-fashioned producer rather than what one is ordinarily today.*

I would say that. If the question is, did we fire Tobe and did Steven take over? No, absolutely not.

*Cinefantastique said "Steven Spielberg directed **Pottergeist**."*

No, not true. It is Steven's movie. It will look like Steven's movie. All the shots were designed by Steven, Steven cast it. Steven was there all the time, as the writer. Directing





of the actors was accomplished as it usually is. Not truly one person always directs the actors, a lot of times the actors do their own thing.

To mention other films I've worked on, the creative force on *Paper Moon* was Peter Bogdanovich, the creative force on *The Warriors* was Walter Hill, the creative force on *The Last Waltz* was Martin Scorsese, and the creative force on *Pottergeist* was Steven Spielberg.

But Tobe was there, Tobe had input, had a chance to be involved in everything.

*The main reason I asked was that I knew Hooper's had some problems in the past. As producers, we guaranteed to the studio that we would get the movie made. That's my job, and Steven's job. I, of course, defer to Steven in a lot of areas because he did write the story and the script and knows what he's doing.*

*He also seems like a person it would be hard not to defer to.*

Exactly. Movies are tough to get up on the screen. That's basically how we worked it, we finished the movie ourselves, Steven and I. Make no mistake, this is Steven's movie. This is not a Tobe Hooper production, this is a Steven Spielberg production.

*How'd the kids get through it? Did they get scared while making it?*

The kids had a great time. Kids are great, they're pretty resilient. I think it's more of a game for them during shooting, than when they see everything all put together.

*It looks like they're being put through hell in the film, you mean.*

Yes, but it's not a cumulative effect on them, because it's day to day, and it's work, and there's a lot of people around; it's fun for them. I don't think they got scared during the shooting, though it was pretty intense and physically demanding.

*Where were the exteriors shot?*

Exteriors were shot in Simi Valley, northwest of Los Angeles. That was our neighbourhood, and then our overlook, our big development, was in Agoura. There's a great overlook there. We shot for three weeks on location.

*Is there a lot of humour in the movie?*

Lots of humour. The movie has got so many different levels in it. It's got a spiritual level, it's got a very humorous level, and it's got a very terrifying level. And these things run throughout the movie, in and out—as I say, like a ride. But I think the real special thing about the movie is the humour. It gives people a chance to have that sort of nervous release, when they can laugh while they're scared.

*I've always thought that horror movies—using the term as it's always been used—should have more humour in them. I think producers should be less afraid of it. The classic horror movies always had humour in them.*

We don't make fun of the genre, it just makes it more real.

*That's the way I feel. A lot of people seem to be afraid that once you start the audience laughing, you won't be able to get them to stop.*

Yes, that's wrong. It's all part of the family's attitude in the film. One of the more interesting things in the movie, for example, is that at first the family is curious about the phenomena, as you and I probably would be. You go, "Oh, yeah, that's kind of neat," until something, of course, happens and makes it serious then, but until then, they're kind of "Oh hey, that's funny." There is a specific event that lets them know that this is not a mischievous, noisemaking ghost.

Television is very important in this picture. You'll probably not leave your set on after midnight after you see this movie. It runs an

hour and fifty-four minutes, just under two hours. It's a good length, just long enough.

*I noticed that *The Thing* and *E.T.* and *Pottergeist* are all coming out in the U.S. in the same month. Is this wise?*

As far as *Pottergeist* and *E.T.* go, which are the only ones we have control over, I don't think they hurt each other at all. I don't think they're in competition with each other. They are so totally different that I think they will just help each other... My belief is that the more movies that are out that are good, the better off we all are. I think that when people see a good movie and then another one, they say "Hey, movies are good again. Let's go out to the movies."

*That's what it says in the ads.*

Yeah. I think Tobe learned a lot on this movie.

*I hope so, because I liked *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. It showed a real flair.*

That's why Steven hired him, because he admired his work on that movie.

*I thought the flair had gone with *Salem's Lot*. I thought oops, what happened to Hooper?*

*Maybe he can't work in a studio environment?*

I don't know. It's an interesting situation. Hopefully this experience—where, as I say, he learned a lot about how to get a movie made—will have a positive effect.

*There's a lot of special effects in the picture?*

Yes, this is a special effects movie, as opposed to *Raiders*, which really wasn't, had effects only in the last ten minutes.

*Pottergeist* is a special effects movie in that we have every conceivable kind of mechanical, optical, visual effect. It's not only optical effects—there are incredible mechanical effects, however, some that have never been done before.

*I understand there's something like an entire town that explodes at the end from underground, or something like that.*

Those are mechanical effects, and then we have the genius of Richard Edlund and Industrial Light and Magic behind us for our optical and visual effects, of which there are over a hundred shots in the movie.

Another thing we tried to do was play upon your childhood fears. We all went through the same things—what's under your bed at night, the closet light, that tree outside your window that looks like a person. Maybe a doll in the room that, when the lights are off, looks like it's alive, and like it's staring at you. All those kind of fears we play on at the beginning of the movie, setting up things. And one of them is this tree. Now, there's this very violent storm—there are several storms in the movie—and there is an incident with the tree which I won't go into.

The mechanical effects guys, headed by Mike Woods, were really put to the test in this one. Not only in creating different effects, but in logistically solving the problems of how to shoot them. For example, we had our whole first floor of the house and back yard—which had a swimming pool in it—built ten feet above the floor on stage 12. The whole thing was on a scaffold so they could work under the house.

*Like a Muppet set.*

Yeah, exactly, not three feet high, but ten feet, because the pool was eight feet deep, so we had to have room for it. So we were all on this platform all day, and there were storms and incredible stuff going on.

They had to really think ahead, as for instance on stage 12, three of the rooms were doubling over for various effects. One that was three feet high, one that was flat—

*You had duplicate sets? That's unusual.*

We had several duplicate sets. And each one had its own specific use. A scheduling nightmare: where are we, what's happening, what's everybody look like, what clothes do they have on.





